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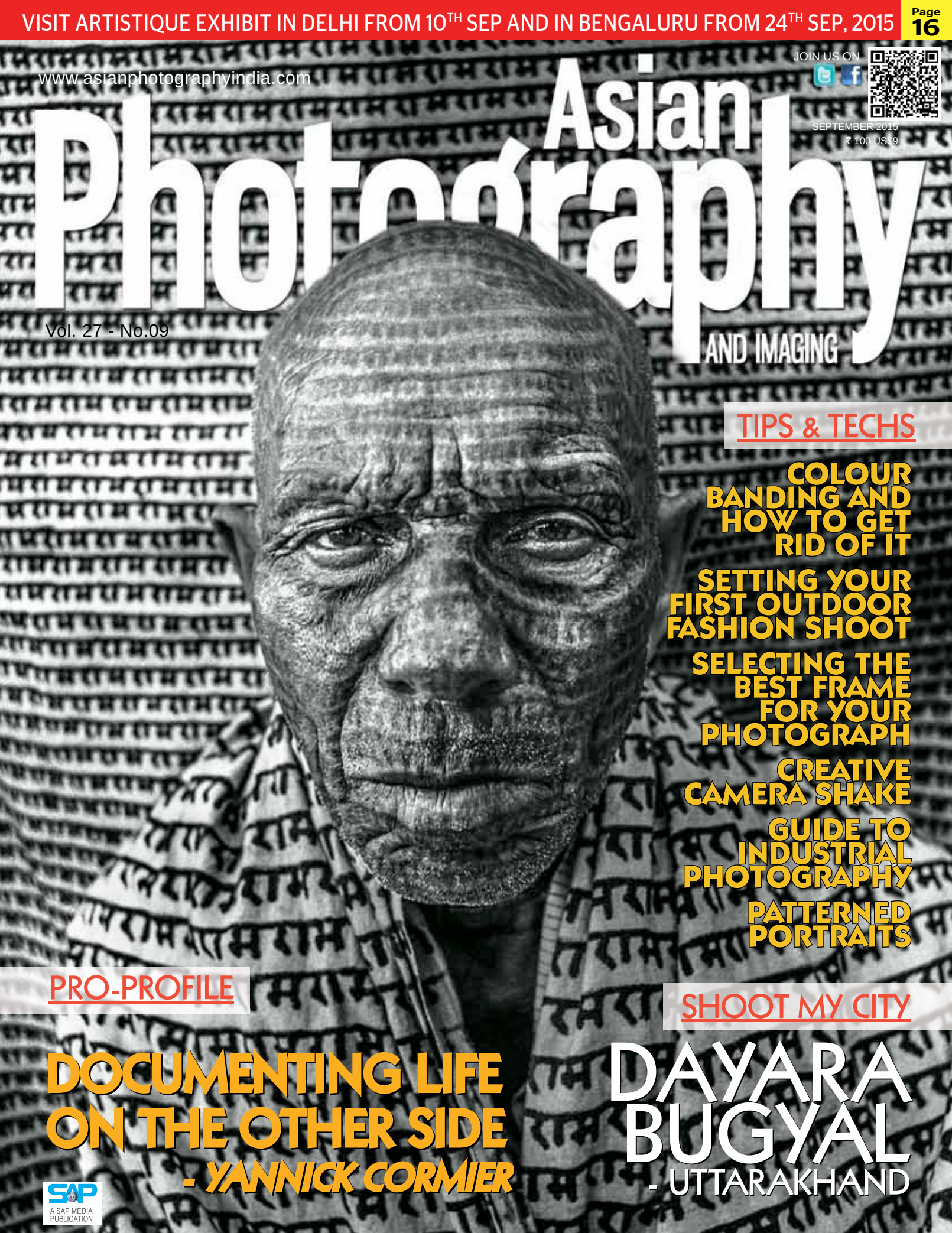

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BHAVYA DESAI

We created a record for Photowalks

Delhi and Bangalore, here we come

The Artistique 2015 traveling exhibit opened in Kolkata on the World Photography Day in August, and the response was unbelievable. With close to 187 people turning up for the *Asian Photography* and Streets of Kolkata Photowalk, we've been told that this was the record number for participation in the East that has been documented. And if the figures are to be believed, then it is the 2nd highest number of participation in India.

The exhibit which was put up at the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) in Kolkata featured the pictures of Shibu Arrakal, Vickram Bawa and Sarker Protick, accompanied by the winning images of Artistique. We have run a special feature in this month's issue, which gives you a round-up of the exhibition along with some images. The issue also announces the winners of the Artistique 2015 contest, and the images have blown the jury away this year as well. With over whopping 12,000 plus entries it has been great to see the manner in which the quality of images are getting developed. You can have a look at the winning entries and other impressive images from the contest inside.

The travelling exhibition now moves to the Wonderwall Gallery in Delhi from 10th – 17th September, 2015 and then to the Chitrakala Parishad in Bangalore from the 24th – 31th September, 2015. You can see further details inside the pages. So see you in your city!

This month's issue is packed with a whole lot of interesting content and features. In our Pro-Profile section, we speak to French photographer Yannick Cormier about his documentary work. The issue also features the Micro Secure Digital Shootout, alongside a number of Tips and Techs articles. We visit the vast and wondrous region of Dayara Bugyal in Uttarakhand for Shoot My City. The issue is guaranteed to be a fun read!

So until next time.....
Happy Reading!!!!!

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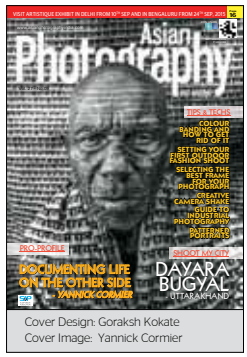

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Readers' Comments and Suggestions...

The Letter of the month will receive a gift from Uniross

I am a travel photographer and I did one documentary shoot on Beneshwar Fair (Tribal Kumbh), where I documented children who visited; do check it. I hope you will like it.
http://manwithacamera.in/gallery/cob/

Regs,
Rohit Kothari, Via Facebook

Hey Rohit,
I have seen the photographs from the link and they look quite good for a concept. But you still need to work on your editing and storytelling skills as a photographer. Some images look a bit over the top in terms of editing; tone down on that and you have beautiful images. Our eyes attract everything that looks 'normal' or as seen through the naked eye. Editing too much can spoil the photograph, so work on that for a bit. The story idea is quite good and attractive, but I would like to give you a few pointers here. In documentation there are two things to keep in mind – Content and Form. While you have quite eye-catching content, your form needs to be similar in all the pictures. You need to pay more attention to the background since these are all posed photographs anyway, you need to keep a similar or at least clutter free background. I hope these help you in the long run and if you adhere to these pointers I am sure you will do very well in future.

Hello! Are winners already notified? Actually, I am asking this question because I am one of the shortlisted ones. Just wanted to know if I had a winning chance or not?

Regards,
Dipayan Bhar, Via Facebook

Hey Dipayan,
The winners have been announced on the opening day of the Kolkata leg of Artistique 2015, and have been shared on our Facebook page as well. It is commendable if you have been shortlisted amongst around 12000 entries that we have received this year and I hope next year you do your best to win. Till then, keep shooting!

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Feedback

Readers' Comments and Suggestions...

The Letter of the month will receive a gift from Uniross

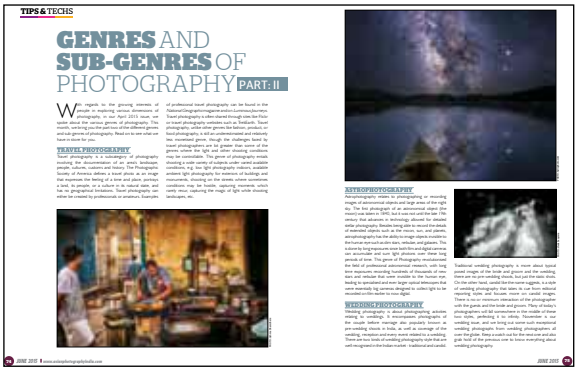
Hello Sir,

I was reading the interview of travel photographer "Gary Arndt", from May 2015 issue.

And the question was (page 23):

"How important is equipment in travel photography?

It is less important than in many other photography genres. I carry one body and three lenses. That's it. Getting in place to get the right shot is far more important than having the best camera or the perfect lens."


TIPS & TECHS

GENRES AND SUB-GENRES OF PHOTOGRAPHY PART: II

Now my query is, which lenses Gary keeps with him during travel. Because Gary's experience will help many new photographers like me that which camera lenses will be useful for travel.

Thanks,
Sandeep, New Delhi

Hey Sandeep,

I am glad that you read our magazine and you have a very interesting question indeed! There are hundreds of lenses being released every year and it is very difficult to zero down on one or two lenses. But fortunately, we did an article very recently on "Genre Specific Camera Buying Guide" (screenshot above) which might be helpful for you and answer your questions. And if you are still interested to know what equipment Gary carries, we will definitely ask him and get back to you soon!

Dear sir,

I'm really thankful to you and your team as your magazine helps me taking my knowledge to the next level. I'm from a small town (Yavatmal) where there are very few people to encourage and inspire. Your magazine plays a vital role for me as it works like an energy booster and gives a different way of looking at photography. I'm very lucky that at the age of 17 I'm getting an abundant storage of useful knowledge.

Regards,
Hariom Kale, Yavatmal

Hey Hariom,

I am elated that our magazine has been able to change people's lives in whatever small way possible, and have been able to promote photography in its true sense. We have strived to fulfil people's thirst for knowledge for 27 years, and it's reassuring for me and my team who have been working hard to bring out the magazine every month. It is also commendable that the young age of 17 and being from a small town has not stopped you from trying to gain knowledge. We have a section called 'Shoot My City' and Yavatmal is a beautiful city on its own. If we do end up coming to your city and shooting for our article, we will definitely give you a call.

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Canon India promotes Andrew Koh as Vice President of Consumer Imaging and Information Center

Canon India announced the promotion of Mr. Andrew Koh to the post of Vice President for its Consumer Imaging and Information Center (CII) effective July 2015.

Mr. Andrew Koh operates out of Canon India's headquarters located in Gurgaon. In his new role, Mr. Koh will be spearheading the Consumer Imaging and Information Centre (CII) as Vice President which includes both Consumer Systems Products (CSP) for laser and inkjet printers and Image Communication Products Centre (ICP) for camera products. Canon informed that Mr.Koh's business acumen not only scaled the sale of camera products, but also enhanced retail presence for Canon Image Squares across the country.

A professional with career spanning over 27 years, Mr. Koh brings with him experience in the Imaging Communications business. In this illustrious career, Mr. Koh has spent 18 years with Canon. To begin with, Mr. Koh served as Marketing Manager for Imaging Systems Products that included microfilm printers and document scanners.Canon has also reported that he played a significant role as the head of Computer Peripheral Division wherein he was actively involved in driving Canon's leadership in the Single Function Printer and AIO (all-in-one machines) space. Mr. Koh also steered the entire gamut of Consumer Imaging & Information Group in Singapore as Senior Director and General Manager and was effective in formulating future marketing strategies in line with the company's vision.

Andrew Koh

SanDisk introduced new line of Portable SSDs

SanDisk recently entered the portable SSD market by recently coming out with a family of drives. The company launched two new drives - the SanDisk Extreme 900 Portable SSD and the SanDisk Extreme 500 Portable SSD, the company's new pocket-sized, rugged drives. The SanDisk Extreme 900 drives reportedly feature speeds of up to nine times faster than a portable hard drive, while the SanDisk Extreme 500 drives offer speeds up to four times faster as claimed by the company. These hard drives are targeted for photographers, videographers, creative professionals and tech enthusiasts looking to move massive files at high speeds, helping them save time and simplify work processes at the office or out in the field.

World's Highest-Performing, Next-Generation Portable SSDs

The SanDisk Extreme 900 Portable SSDs are aimed at performance and capacity. Available in up to 1.92TB, the company claims that the new drives feature transfer speeds nine times faster than a portable hard drive, giving users a significant advantage when they are working with 4K video, taking detailed high-res photos or creating large graphics files.

With its compact, durable aluminum case, professionals can take the SanDisk Extreme 900 Portable SSD with them wherever they go, allowing them to carry a massive digital portfolio they can access and share in just seconds. With fast speeds of up to 850MB/s, the SanDisk Extreme 900 Portable SSD is said to reduce wait time thus increasing productivity. These new drives come with both USB Type-C and Type-A cables to provide the ultimate flexibility when working between systems.

The SanDisk Extreme 500 Portable SSD is less than half the size of most smartphones and reportedly delivers more than four times the speed of a portable hard drive. The pocket-sized drive allows users to transfer big videos and photo libraries at up to 415MB/s. Available in up to 480GB capacity, this light-weight yet durable drive is supposedly a high-performance solution suitable for anyone looking for a fast, reliable storage on the go. Designed for portability and durability, the SanDisk Extreme 500 Portable SSDs feature a black finish with unique rubber bumpers, and a metal ring that easily clips into a bag.

Reportedly, these new portable SSDs are built to sustain the most rugged environments, featuring both temperature and impact-resistant materials, ideal for many work environments. The family of SanDisk Extreme Portable SSDs also feature SanDisk SecureAccess software with 128-bit encryption to secure files.

Pricing and Availability

The SanDisk Extreme 500 Portable SSDs will be available worldwide in capacities of 120GB, 240GB and 480GB at ₹8490, ₹12990 and ₹22990 respectively. The SanDisk Extreme 900 Portable SSDs will also be available in Q3 in capacities of 480GB (₹35990), 960GB (₹53990) and 1.92TB (₹89990). Both new SSD lines feature a three-year warranty.

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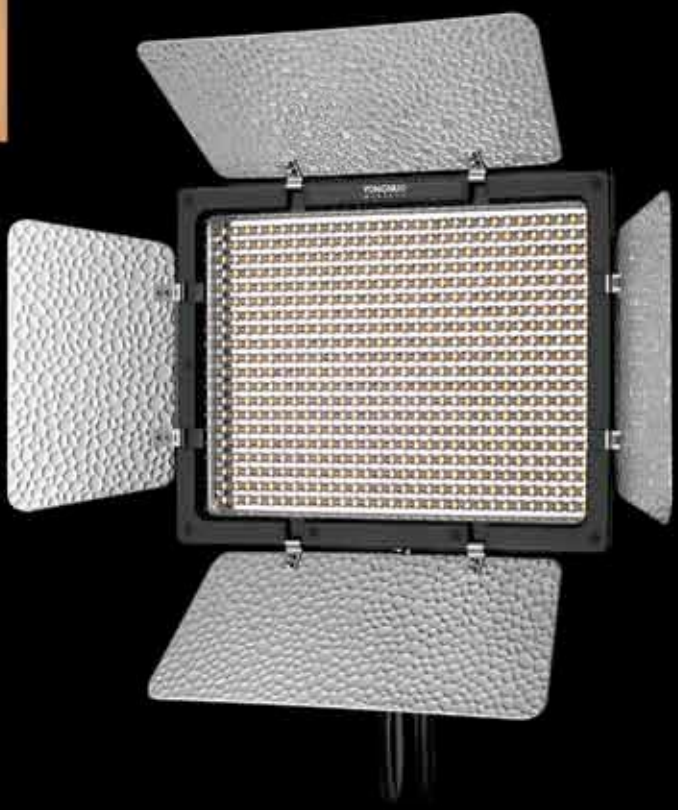
* Adopts proprietary LED driving technology which specially developed for supplementary lighting to effectively avoid corrugation, stroboscopic flash and dithering
* Two color temperature for selection: 5500K/3200K~5500K



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Sony launches new α7R II Camera : World's First Back-Illuminated 35mm Full-Frame Sensor

Sony India launched full-frame mirrorless camera, the α7R II. This interchangeable lens camera features the world's first back-illuminated full-frame Exmor R CMOS sensor1, which realises high-resolution, high-sensitivity and high-speed AF response up to 40% faster than the original α7R because of the 399 focal plane phase detection AF points. The camera includes a 5-axis image stabilisation system borrowed from the acclaimed α7 II model and has the ability to shoot and record 4K videos in multiple formats including Super 35mm and full-frame format. It has a newly refined XGA OLED Tru-Finder with the world's highest (0.78x) viewfinder magnification.

High-Resolution, High-Sensitivity and High-Speed Response

The 42.4-megapixel sensor combines gapless on-chip lens design and anti-reflective coating on the surface of the sensor's glass seal to dramatically improve light collection efficiency, resulting in high-sensitivity with low-noise performance and wide dynamic range. This allows the camera to shoot at the ISO range of 100 to 25600 that is expandable to ISO 50 to 102400.

5-Axis Image Stabilisation Optimised for 42.4-Megapixels

This advanced form of image stabilisation corrects camera shake along five axes during shooting, including angular shake that tends to occur with telephoto lens, shift shake (X and Y axis) which becomes noticeable as magnification increases, and rotational shake (roll) that often affects video recording.

Unrivaled 4K Movie Shooting Performance

α7R II camera includes the ability to record movies in 4K quality (QFHD 3840x2160) in either Super 35mm crop mode or full-frame mode.

Enhanced Design, Operability and Reliability

The new α7R II camera is Wi-Fi and NFC-compatible and is fully functional with Sony's PlayMemories Mobile application available for Android and iOS platforms, as well as Sony's growing range of PlayMemories Camera Apps, which add a range of creative capabilities to the camera. It is also compatible with Sony's growing line-up of 'α' mount lenses.

α7R II can be ordered through Alpha Flagship Stores and Brand Stores. Approximate cost of the product is ₹2,39,990

Nikon India launches free online D-SLR tutorials

Nikon India recently announced a web series of D-SLR tutorials compiled in 48 episodes. According to Nikon India, the tutorials focus on the various advantages of using a D-SLR while dispelling the common myths. The YouTube series comprises of 24 tutorial episodes in English and Hindi language each.

English and Hindi being the two widely used languages of India are the most spoken ones too and Nikon India's initiative to release a web-series of tutorials is targeted at the masses with an objective of simplifying photography techniques, and to assist consumers expand their creativity. It is a comprehensive collection delving into the technical features of a D-SLR, film making using a D-SLR and optimising the use of D-SLRs for different genres of photography.

With the Indian photography market witnessing a robust growth and D-SLRs gaining popularity, it becomes imperative to explain the whole gamut of techniques. Nikon said that that these tutorials are conceptualised to share with consumers the knowledge about making an optimal use of their D-SLR, master new techniques and improve their photography skills by providing clear, direct information on a wide range of technical and creative topics.

In order to empower consumers with essential information within the confines of their house Nikon India is including a free DVD comprising of all 48 videos with each D-SLR sales pack, further inspiring them to take better photographs.

The tutorials can be viewed at: *https://www.youtube.com/user/nikonind/videos*

Wireless LED Studio Light

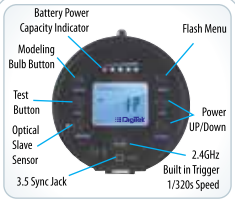
for Professional Photographers

Expand your Creativity to a Different Level

DSF-600PRO Plus

Can Work on AC & DC Both

Built in Removable 12V-6000mAh Li-ion Battery



Back Panel

2.4G Wireless Trigger

AC Power Adapter

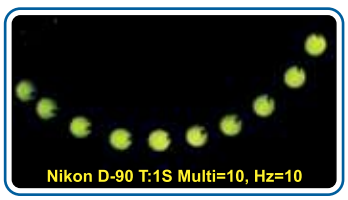
2-in-1 Handle

Hard Alluminium Case

Features:

1. Built in Li-ion battery ,No Cable-No Cords **Wireless Studio Flash**
2. Fast duration time up to 1/11000s.and with multi-flash.
3. Precise power arrange 1/64-1(IGBT)
4. Built-in 2.4GHz trigger(1/320s)
5. Compatible: always fit Elinchrom mount;
6. With Φ3.50 sync cord, (support external 1/8000s)
7. 7 f-stop 1/64-1/1 step adjustment, precise in power variation;
8. MULTI flash, MULTI times: 5,10,15,20,25 times, Frequency: 1,2,...,10
9. High-speed flash duration: Max 1/11000s

Flash Duration - 1/11000s


Nikon D-90 T:1S Multi=10, Hz=10

Model	DSF-600 Pro Plus
Output	600 Watt
GN (ISO 100/2m/Standard Reflector)	56
Recycling Time	0.1-4.5s
Power Range	7f-stop (1/64-1/1)
Multi Times	5,10,15,20,25 times
Frequency (Hz)	1,2.....10 times/sec.
High Speed Flash Duration	FP-1/11000, F2-1/9000, F3-1/6000, F4-1/4000, F5-1/2000
Battery-Charging Time	6 Hrs (With Self-Protection)
Color Temperature	5500K±200k
Sensor Distance	≥15m
Protection Device	Overheating Protection
Triggering Way	100m, with inner 2.4GHz Remote Control
Modeling Bulb	5W LED Ligtht
Buzz	Yes (ON/OFF)
Power Source	Interchangeable & Memory Less Battery
Battery-Charging Way	Plug-in Charging Type
Li-ion Battery	12V-6000mAh

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Ask Your Expert

Send in your Questions to
askyourexpert@asianphotographyindia.com

Answered by
Bhavya Desai
Editor, Asian Photography

I am a regular reader of your magazine and I started my photography career a year ago with a Nikon D5200. Can you please tell me or give me tips for Landscape Photography?

Arun kumar
Hyderabad

AP Question of the Month

Dear Arun,
It is indeed great to hear that you have taken up photography seriously. Landscape photography is surely a genre which is growing enormously. Techniques, composition and vision are very important in this genre too. One can club Industrial Photography and Street Photography too with Landscape Photography and have a better spread of work. Travel a lot and I recommend that you do not restrict yourself in using specific lenses. Explore and do read our article of *Asian Photography*; June, 2015 (Vol. 27 – No. 06) which talks about Landscape and other genres of photography.

TIPS & TECHS

Understanding Metering Modes

Firstly, I want to thank the AP team for giving me their helping hand for unanswered questions. Recently, I have faced a problem again. I can't understand the metering function and the two options (Matrix & Centre-weighted). So, I am requesting you earnestly to solve my problem.

Mrinmoy Bairagya
West Bengal

Dear Mrinmoy,

Thank you for writing back to us, we are always here to help our readers. The metering function is indeed a difficult thing to explain in this particular section of the magazine. To tell you in brief, metering is basically a way for the camera to determine the exposure. In center-weighted metering, the camera meter takes into account a large part of the whole scene to calculate the exposure, whereas, in Matrix mode the camera's meter determines the exposure judging the entire scene in view. It takes the reading of various points across the scene and gives the best exposure. We have had an article on the same in the past where we have discussed all the metering modes in detail, and you should refer to that. The article was published in September 2014 Issue. Above is a screenshot of the same.

Can you change speed of the flash when your in-built flash is on?
If you can, then how? The camera I have is a Nikon D90

Steven Phillips
Mumbai

Dear Steven,

It's nice to know that you're using the built–in flash of your camera for creative photography. There is a negative notion in general that use of flash means that one is using the auto mode in a D-SLR.

All the D-SLRs which have built-in flash are automatically synced. The camera's shutter speed automatically stops at 1/200 when it comes to Nikon D90 camera. You can always attach an external flash and then use higher shutter speeds. We would also recommend that you should surely go through the camera's manual and refer to it on a regular basis when you go out and shoot; it'll be of great help.

THE QUESTION OF THE MONTH WINS CAMERA CLEANING KIT WORTH ₹600

ENTRY FREE

The 3rd edition of Artistique is Back!

and this time it's even BIGGER!

theme
INDEPENDENCE

Photographer's Interactive Session

Date: 10th September (Delhi)
Time: 4.30 P.M

Date: 24th September (Bengaluru)
Time: 4.30 P.M

for more visit: www.asianphotographyindia.com

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Asian Photography & IMAGING presents

Artistique

A PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION & CONTEST

Exhibits by

- Vickram Bawa
- Shibu Arakkal
- Sarker Protick
- Artistique Winning Entries

Exhibit Details

DELHI

Date: 10th September to 16th September 2015

Venue: Wonderwall

New Delhi 110030

F 213B Lado Sarai (1st Floor)

BENGALURU

Date: 24th September to 30th September 2015

Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath

No.1, Art Complex, Kumara krupa Road,

Bengaluru, Karnataka 560001

Micro SD Card **Shootout**

Since a few years the use of memory cards has not been restricted only to digital cameras, and it has expanded to more consumer devices like mobile phones and tablets which have adopted use of external memory, along with having a sizeable fixed internal memory. With the upward rate of growth of technology used in such devices, there is more demand for the memory cards. With devices where users play games, watch movies, and more, the memory cards need to have significant transfer speeds for stutter-free operation with sizeable storage capacities. Hence we asked companies to send in their best Micro SD cards and decided to put them through our tests.

Contenders
Kingston 16GB microSDHC UHS-I
SanDisk Extreme Pro 16GB microSDHC UHS-I
Transcend Ultimate 16GB microSDHC UHS-I, MLC

The contenders for this month's Micro SD card shootout were Kingston, SanDisk and Transcend. Each manufacturer sent their best UHS-I card in the 16GB category that support FAT32 file format. Kingston sent in their Kingston 16GB microSDHC UHS-I card priced at ₹1,999 which claims a read speed of 90MB/s and write speed of 80MB/s. Similarly, SanDisk sent in their Extreme Pro 16GB microSDHC UHS-I, priced at ₹900 which has a card speed of 633x, claims read and write speeds of 95MB/s. Transcend sent in their Transcend Ultimate 16GB microSDHC Class10 U1, MLC with card speed of 600x and read and write speed of up to 90MB/s, priced at ₹1035.

Parameters
We have taken the following things into consideration while reviewing the cards:
- **Crystal Disk Mark 3.0.1**
- **Folder Test**
- **In Camera performance**

The Benchmark tests

The micro SD cards were put to test on various aspects, in terms of testing them with specialised software Crystal Disk Mark 3.0.1, that calculates read and write speeds, the folder transfer test, and the in-camera performance test. The test was to check the read and write speeds, performance, and their rating with respect to each other.

Crystal Disk Mark 3.0.1

Transcend had a reading speed of 34.78 MB/s and write speed at 26.68 MB/s. SanDisk recorded a read speed of 34.79 MB/s and a write speed of 27.16 MB/s. Kingston clocked a read speed of 34.92 MB/s, which was slightly higher compared to SanDisk, and the write speed reached up to 26.67 MB/s.

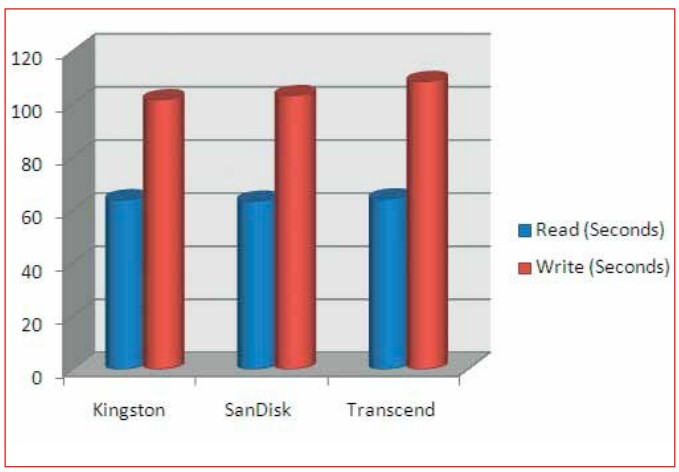
Kingston 16GB microSDHC UHS-I

SanDisk Extreme Pro 16GB microSDHC UHS-I

Transcend Ultimate 16GB microSDHC UHS-I, MLC

Folder Transfer test

We put each card through the paces to check which clocks the fastest. This test was done by creating a folder which contained data worth 1 GB (1024 MB). Transferring the folder from card to computer was recorded as read time and from computer to card as write time. SanDisk performed exceptionally well with its read time clocked at 63.35 seconds and write at 103.16 seconds. Transcend took a read time of 64.22 seconds and a write time of 108.49 seconds. Kingston clocked a read time of 63.91 seconds and 101.62 seconds to write the data. The graph below will help you understand the read and write times for the respective microSD cards.



In Camera Performance

In this test we made sure that the camera used for all the cards was same and on the same settings. The camera that we chose was the Canon 5Ds, which was set to 1/60s, Aperture 7.1 and ISO 100 on a continuous shutter in manual mode. The process was followed by setting the stop clock to 30 sec, and as the shutter was released the clock timed the number of shots, on the basis of which we calculated the frames per second. The Kingston resulted with 2.2 fps, SanDisk with 2.36 fps and Transcend 1.73 fps. SanDisk aced the test, followed really close with Kingston, and Transcend.

Conclusion

Transcend Ultimate 16GB microSDHC UHS-I, MLC

In the Crystal Disk Mark test, the Transcend had a reading speed of 34.78 MB/s, almost second place by 0.01MB/s and second best write speed at 26.68 MB/s. However, in the Folder Transfer test the card had a read time of 64.22 seconds and a write time of 108.49 seconds, coming in third place. In the in-camera performance too, Transcend came in third place with 1.73fps. While the card did not lose from a great margin, it overall did not match up to the competition. So if a slight difference in performance is not your concern, then retailing at an affordable price of ₹1035 users can definitely consider the Transcend MicroSD card.

SanDisk Extreme Pro 16GB microSDHC UHS-I

In the Crystal Disk Mark test, SanDisk had a read speed of 34.79MB/s (second place) and had the best write speed at 27.16 MB/s. In the folder transfer test, SanDisk had the best read time of 63.35 seconds, however, was the second best scoring write time 103.16 seconds test. The SanDisk card performed the best in the in-camera performance test recording 2.36fps. Performing well in almost all parameters, and retailing at the price of Rs ₹900, lowest of the three cards, the SanDisk Extreme Pro 16GB microSDHC UHS-I is this year's MicroSD card shootout winner.

Kingston 16GB microSDHC UHS-I

Kingston performed well in the tests too. In the CDM test, Kingston recorded the best read of 34.92 MB/s, and write speed 26.67 MB/s, losing second place by 0.01MB/s. In the folder transfer test, the Kingston card clocked the second best read time of 63.91 seconds and the shortest time of 101.62 seconds to write the data. In the in-camera performance test too Kingston wasn't far behind, scoring 2.2fps. Though the card had good performance in most of the parameters, the card is retailed at a high price of ₹1999, which is 2x higher compared to the cost of the other two cards. This puts the Kingston 16GB microSDHC UHS-I in the second place this year's Micro SD shootout.

Asian Photography

Artistique

A PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION & CONTEST

NEXT STOP

New Delhi
Dates: 10th September to 16th September 2015
Gallery Name: Wonderwall, F 213B Lado Sarai (1st Floor) New Delhi 110030
Gallery Timing: 11 am to 7 pm

Bengaluru
Dates: 24th September to 30th September 2015
Gallery Name: Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath, No.1, Art Complex, Kumara Krupa Road, Bengaluru, Karnataka 560001
Gallery Timing: 10:30 am to 7:30 pm

On 19th August, World Photography Day again witnessed the return of Artistique, as the 2015 edition of the exhibition kicked off at ICCR in Kolkata. Like every year it had something better to offer. On the journey of making the masses acknowledge photography as an art form, *Asian Photography* went a step ahead and made the third edition of Artistique a travelling exhibition in Kolkata, Delhi, Bangalore, and finally, at Mumbai. In 2013, Artistique was first launched as an exhibition to promote the aesthetic importance of photography, which soon branched out to include works of amateurs alongside works of eminent individuals, in the form of a national competition to promote and encourage young talent in India.

THE CONTEST

Artistique was divided into two parts, i.e. an exhibition and a nationwide competition, organised by the *Asian Photography* team and judged by world renowned photographers and the Editor of *Asian photography* magazine.

The photo contest which was announced in April, invited entries from readers around the country to kick-start the process. Participants were required to send in their photographs under three different categories, Black and White, Moments and Conceptual which was under the theme "Independence". We received entries from photographers all over India and the contest has received an overwhelming response

Ongoing interactive session with Bhavya Desai, Editor of *Asian Photography*, Deshkalyan Chowdhury, Chief Photographer at *Anandabazar Patrika* and Debarshi Duttagupta, Nikon Grand Prix winner 2010-2011 on World Photography Day at ICCR, Kolkata

Organised by Asian Photography | Camera Partner Nikon At the heart of the image | Print Partner EPSON EXCEED YOUR VISION | Memory Partner Kingston | Lighting Partner PHOTOQUIP | Merchandising Partner FREECULTR freecultr.com

Attendees pose with *Asian Photography* representative after Photowalk at Mullick Ghat, Kolkata

with over 12000 entries under the different themes in three months.

These were short listed and selected by a jury comprising Arko Datta, one of the country's leading photojournalist, Jatin Kampani, ace fashion photographer and Bhavya Desai, editor of *Asian Photography.*

THE WINNERS

The contestants who won were Samir Halder in the Black and White category, Sudipto Das in the Moments category and Martin Nittalla in the Conceptual category. The winners of the contest each will receive prizes worth ₹2 lakh in each category. The winning images and the honorary images are showcased in the four city exhibition. The honorary mentions in the black and white category were Avishek Das and Samya Ray, in the Moments category were Kinsuk Das and Mithun Saha, and Arpit Saha and Chaitali Karmakar in the conceptual category.

PHOTOWALK

Prior to the exhibition a Photowalk was organised by photo collective Streets of Calcutta and *Asian Photography* Magazine, which created history as Kolkata witnessed over 160 photographers coming together at Mullik Ghat and exploring its delirious alleys through their lenses. This was the biggest gathering ever recorded in the history of Kolkata photography. Photography enthusiasts from Chennai were also present at the event which was inaugurated by a photojournalist from *Asian Photography* team making it an eventful learning experience.

EXHIBITION AND INTERACTIVE SESSION

The first stop of the four-city exhibition was Kolkata, and the nine day exhibition saw a footfall of more than 400 photography enthusiasts, amateur and professionals. On World Photography Day, the opening day of the exhibition saw an interactive session with Bhavya Desai, editor of *Asian Photography*, Deshakalyan Chowdhury, chief photographer at *Anandabazar Patrika* and Debarshi Duttagupta, Nikon Grand Prix Award winner.

With an attendance of about a hundred people in the opening day the interactive session spanned an hour and a half. The question and answer session ranged from the importance of social media like Facebook and Instagram to how to earn a living in the field of photography. It was a learning experience for both the attendees and the editorial team and interns. Some spent hours looking at the displayed back issues of the magazine, as well as the exhibited photographs.

After the lively interactive session, certificates were handed out by the panellists to the participants of the photowalk, and the entire evening was a learning experience for the visitors.

THE EXHIBITS

This year's exhibition included selections of works from renowned photographers Vickram Bawa, Sarker Protick and Shibu Arakkal.

SARKER PROTICK

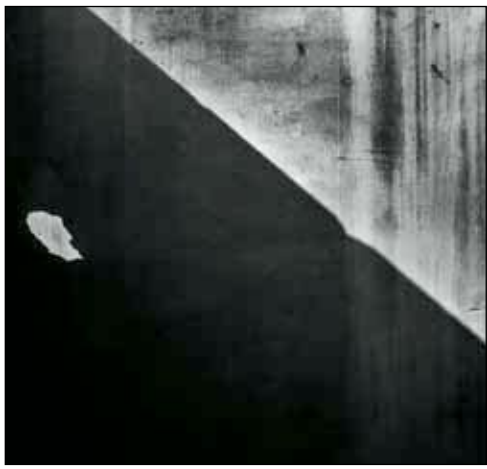
At the young age of 29, Sarker Protick has achieved what most photojournalism and documentary photographers dream of. Hailing from Dhaka, Bangladesh, the documentary photographer won a World Press Photo award, (2nd prize story, Daily Life) this year for his touching series 'What Remains'.

What Remains

An award-winning series by Protick, What Remains is a testament to love, the love for his grandparents, John and Prova. Described by no better word than 'ethereal', this series takes the viewer on an incredible and emotional journey, as Protick captures the last days of his frail grandparents. Visiting them frequently, Protick one day started capturing his grandparents, after he saw a white light coming through a white door in a white-walled room. He says that working on the series, he became closer to them, and how he could relate to what he was seeing with what he felt. The beautiful high-key images Protick shot make them appear bathed in an aura, as if they were at the gates of heaven, as if everything was on a wait - a wait for something that he does not completely understand.

SHIBU ARAKKAL

An award winning photo artist, Shibu Arakkal's work has garnered respect across India and International art circles in numerous shows and exhibitions, spanning over two decades. In 2013, Arakkal became one of the very few Indians to have won the prestigious 'Lorenzo il Magnifico' Gold Prize in Digital Art for his work from 'Constructing Life' at the Florence Biennale in Italy. Arakkal displayed his series 'Walls'.



Walls

In his latest series, Arakkal has photographed walls. The walls in the series, are not mere walls but questions that come alive through varied facades.

He explains, "Stories that linger in the air, perhaps just out of reach, until you run your mind's eye, your hands, your palms, or your fingertips over these surfaces and gently, like braille, decipher the answers hidden in every breath. I believe that walls have living, breathing spirits and slices of time that merge with them as they are built, as they stand and even as they are broken or torn down."

These walls have been shot everywhere around the world, from Jaipur to Tiruvanamalai, from Bhutan to Singapore, from Paris to Dubai, from Istanbul to Florence, from Bangalore to Siena. He says that it is an exploration of the meaning of freedom and independence, as the essence of independence is the ability to recognise walls and have the strength of will to bring them down, when they are limiting our freedom.

VICKRAM BAWA

A renowned fashion, advertising and automobile photographer from India, Vickram Bawa has many firsts to his name. As a photographer, he has won multiple awards from Master up, Prix de la Photographie Paris, The International Color Awards, The Spider Awards, PIEA Award and many more. Luerzer's Archive has included him in the list of 200 Best Advertising Photographers for the year 2010-2011. Bawa has shot for various magazines including *Femina*, *Verve*, *Hello!*, *L'Official*, *Elle*, *Hi Blitz*, *Marie Claire*, *Stuff* among others, numbering at over 300 covers. He has photographed for various brands, including Coca-Cola, Dove, Godrej, L'oreal, Reebok, Skoda India, Sony Electronics, Taj Hotels etc. Bawa has also shot a horde of Bollywood celebrities from Amitabh Bachchan to Shah Rukh Khan. He displayed his never before seen series 'Everyday is a dream'.

Everyday is a dream

Bawa's latest series is an exploration of life, with all things distinct. Describing the series, Bawa explains, "The days fighting with the nights, the mundane and the exciting both juxtaposing each other for attention. Moments of a time and space in posterity. The past warranting the attention to interpretation in the present."

With delicate monochromatic shots of everyday objects like flowers, shoes, books, empty rooms and emptier alleyways, Bawa subtly plays with light and shadow. These strikingly well-composed images, some deliberately out of focus, others cleverly under-exposed, evoke a certain soft sense of mood, as each viewer is left to interpret for themselves what they take from the series.

WHAT PEOPLE HAD TO SAY

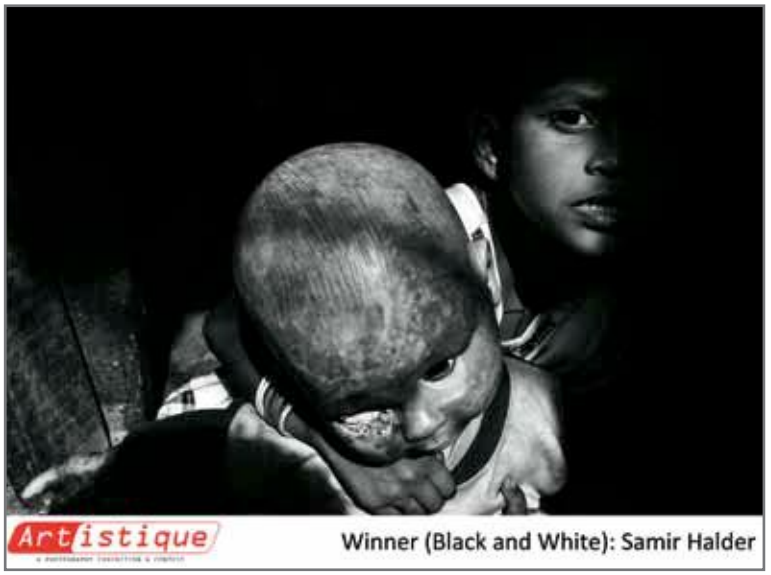
"The exhibition was quite good with wonderful photographs on display. I liked the fact that the judges were eminent photographers, masters in their own field," said Rana Pandey, a student of Presidency University to the *Asian Photography* team when asked how the exhibition was.

"I have visited many photography exhibitions and art exhibits, but an exhibit of this scale is unprecedented in Kolkata. Being a student of social work I can relate to the emotions and feelings that the photographers tried to convey. The life size prints, the huge exhibition hall and the incredible overall ambience took this exhibition to the next level," said Debopama Banerjee, a student of Vidyasagar School of Social Work.

WHAT'S NEXT

The overall tone for everyone was positive, as people thoroughly enjoyed the exhibit and relished on the fact that an initiative was taken for the Kolkata photography fraternity. As we write this article, the prints are already on their way, as this month the exhibition moves to New Delhi and Bengaluru, in an effort to showcase and promote photography as an artform. Mark your calendars and get ready, we hope to see your there!

WINNING ENTRIES



Winner (Black and White): Samir Halder

Black and White Category

Winner: Samir Halder

Conceptual Category

Winner: Martin Nittalla

Winner (Conceptual): Martin Nittalla

Winner (Moments): Sudipto Das

Moments Category

Winner: Sudipto Das

HONOURARY MENTIONS

Black and White Category

Photo: Avishek Das

Photo: Samya Ray

Conceptual Category

Photo: Arpit Saha

Photo: Chaitali Karmarkar

Moments Category

Photo: Kinsuk Das

Photo: Mithun Saha

SOME OF THE ENTRIES - BLACK AND WHITE CATEGORY

PHOTO: DIPAYAN PRAMANIK
Category: Black and White

PHOTO: ARNAB DAS
Category: Black and White

PHOTO: ARIJIT DAS
Category: Black and White

PHOTO: RITABRATA DAS
Category: Black and White

SOME OF THE ENTRIES - CONCEPTUAL CATEGORY

PHOTO: KAUSTAV SARKAR
Category: CONCEPTUAL

PHOTO: AKASH GHOSH
Category: CONCEPTUAL

PHOTO: SAI KRISHNA DURSHETTY
Category: CONCEPTUAL

SOME OF THE ENTRIES - MOMENTS CATEGORY

PHOTO: SUJAN SARKAR
Category: Moments

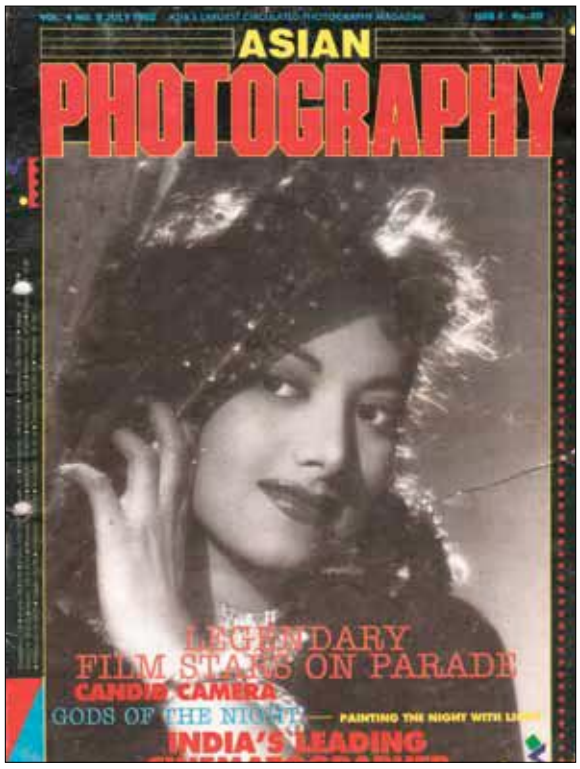
PHOTO: IBRAHIM KHALIL SAGOR
Category: MOMENTS

PHOTO: THULASIDASAN TD
Category: MOMENTS

PHOTO: ANISH GHOSH
Category: MOMENTS

BLAST FROM THE PAST

July 1993, Vol. 4 No. 09



EDITORS NOTE:

AS PART OF THE NEW INITIATIVE AND CONTENT IN THE MAGAZINE WE THOUGHT THAT IT WOULD BE GREAT TO GIVE THE READERS AN IDEA ABOUT WHERE WE HAVE ORIGINATED FROM? WE WERE GOING THROUGH OUR ARCHIVES. AND WE WANTED TO SEE HOW IT ALL STARTED AND UNDERSTAND THE MAGAZINE'S LEGACY AND LINEAGE. SO AS PART OF A TREAT TO THE READERS WE WILL BE REVISITING THE ARTICLES FROM OUR ARCHIVES THAT HAVE QUITE LITERALLY MAPPED THE CHANGE AND METAMORPHOSIS OF THE INDIAN PHOTOGRAPHIC LANDSCAPE. SO THIS SPACE IN THE MAGAZINE EVERY MONTH WILL BE DEDICATED TO FEATURING AN ARTICLE FROM THE PAST. HENCE THE NAME 'BLAST FROM THE PAST'.

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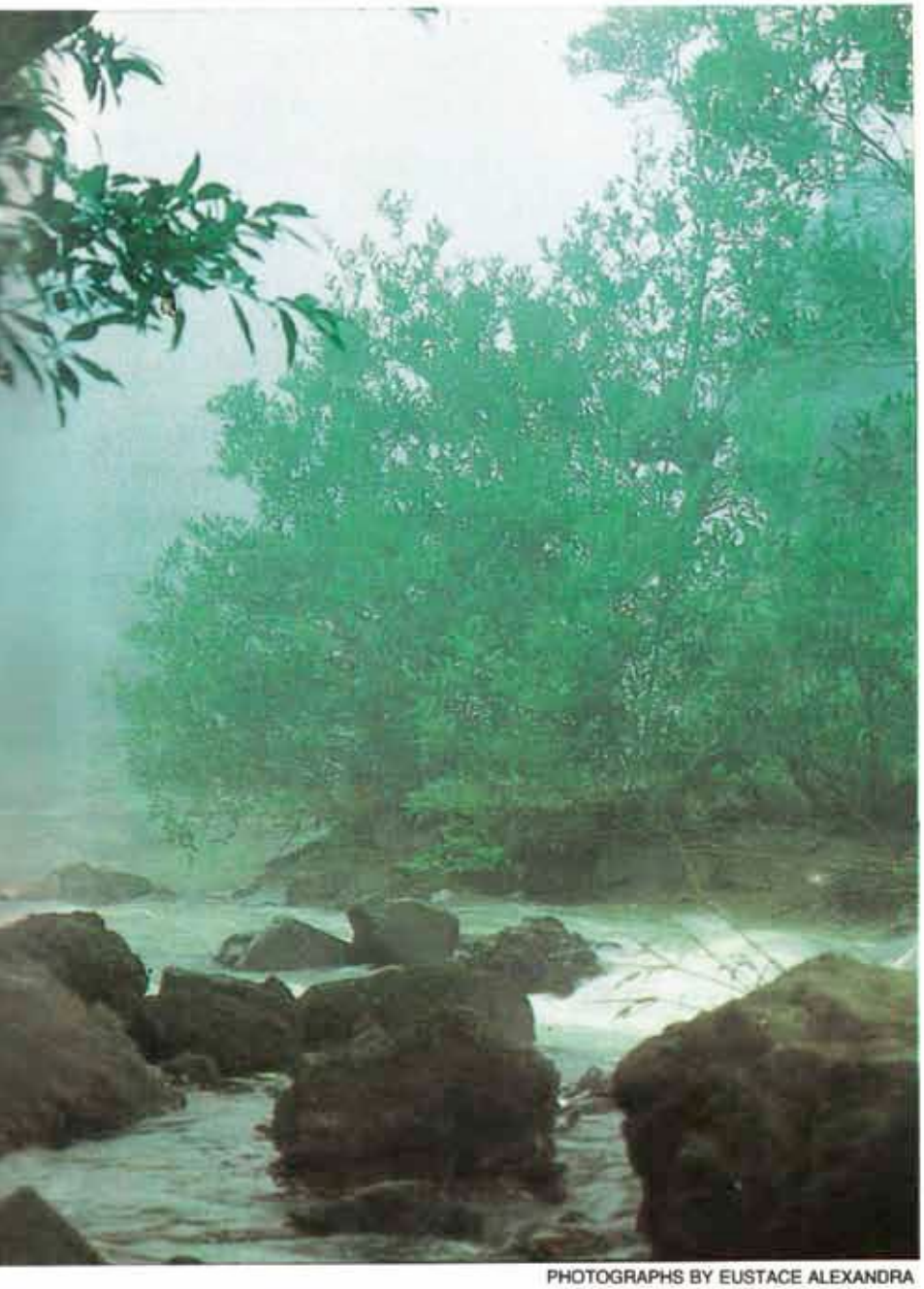
THE MYSTERY OF MALSHEJ GHAT bird 'suicides', at the very beautiful and pleasant, crowded, monsoon hill resort of Malshej Ghat, bears no relation to the large number of the Deaths Head Hawk Moths found there — that featured so prominently in providing the clue to the murder in 'The Silence of the Lambs'. **Eustace V. Alexandra,** who had extensively trekked this site thrice last monsoon, reports that these 'suicides' closely follow the pattern of the Jatinga bird 'suicides' that take place in Assam.

TRAVEL PHOTO FEATURE

SILENCING THE LAMBS

Last year I met Charmayne, a very intelligent woman at Malshej Ghat. "Have you been here before," she enquires. "This is my third visit," I replied. She gave me a quizzical look. "What do you find so interesting about this place". I had no answer. I found it difficult to answer a non photographer, dear Charmayne. I present herewith my photofeature on the exquisite beauty of the place at monsoon time, you have only to train your eyes and search for it.

Similar to the Jatinga bird 'suicides'



PHOTOGRAPHS BY EUSTACE ALEXANDRA

in Assam, Maharashtra too witnesses a similar phenomenon at the Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation resort at Malshej Ghat, which is situated on a plateau 2000 ft high, 154 km from Bombay. The Plateau is almost barren, covered with scrub and the cactus *'Euphorbia'*, below lies a deep valley in the Sahayadri mountain range which is covered with a dense moist deciduous forest. The average drop of the rugged Sahyadris is 3,000 feet to the Konkan valley below. Harischandragadh fort rises another 2,000 odd feet above the plateau, towards the north. At this time of the year, the whole area is covered with a thick dense fog, where one could find it difficult to stretch visibility up to ten feet; so much so that on one such foggy day occupants of a car had to get out and walk on either side of the steep ghat to guide the car through. This photographer had the horrible experience of being thrown off his feet and blown for about ten feet in spite of carrying a heavy haversack and only a ditch saved me from being thrown down the valley. The massif of Harishchandragadh rising above the deep valley force the wind at an unbelievable velocity through the valley and is driven upward at such a high velocity that even strong fliers like the Vulture and Egret turn turtle, whilst weak fliers get disoriented and look for safety in the only visible area around being the powerful floodlight high atop the watertank of the MTDC resort. Birds like the **Quail** were even attracted to torchlight. The bright tungsten lit canteen of the resthouse which is glass enclosed was visible from very far, the heavy mist diffuses the light creating a bright halo like effect. The birds were seen to panic and bang themselves on the glass panes till exhaustion finally set in; some hurt themselves, broke neck and legs and most died, some even at a distance from the resthouse. The high velocity winds forced the birds right on to the walls of the resthouse which is situated right in its path. In the inky darkness, the lights attracted the birds to their gory graveyard, battering themselves to death against the glass panes and walls of the resthouse. When a naturalist forced the MTDC manager to shut off the powerful spotlight; one Koel that was banging itself against the walls immediately turned its face away from the wall and stood completely still on the parapet ledge; thus ending its desire to self-destruct. This behaviour amongst others rules out the possibility of birds coming to feed on insects; besides most of the birds found dead were diurnal i.e. they are day feeders, that rest at night.

Mr. Isaac Kehimkar, Jt. Editor of HORNBILL, says that it is a natural phenomenon. "When turtles are born they see a halo at the horizon and move towards the sea-horizon; but when they see hotel lights they get disoriented with the artificial lights and move towards the hotel-halolights; similarly birds get

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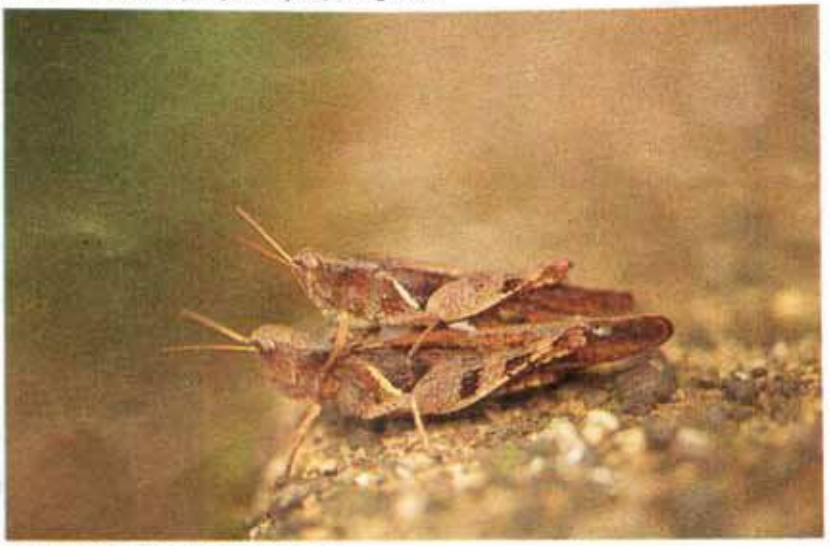
disoriented on seeing lights and as there is no glass in nature they dash against the glass".

Mr. Ulhas Rane ex. honorary secretary of the Bombay Natural History Society also avers that it is a natural phenomenon and not suicide. "At the plateau at Malshej Ghat, the North-South wind changes its direction to East-West; and the wind coming from the South-West is channelled with force in a funnel like effect; this along with clouds and mist forces the WEAK FLIERS only to get dragged against the rocks and die, those that see lights under such circumstances are propelled towards it only to meet their end." He had himself found up to forty species that were weak fliers. When I questioned him about the large, metallic purpled, beautiful bird, about the size of a large Duck; the **Purple Moorhen** that I found dead one morning, he quipped "All fowls are weak fliers".

During the rains, the whole area is covered with mist. On one of these days that I was there, every second of the 24-hour day presented a changing panorama; the swirling mist disappears suddenly as it had come before our eyes; and the sunbeam approached us at high speed only to disappear a few minutes later. One with an eye for beauty could stare at it all day enthralled. One peak resembled a beautiful lady head bent back to do her facials, the approaching mist covered her face as if she was having a steam bath. One's imagination could run wild here. A butterfly which was trying to go down to the valley but was pushed upwards fifty feet; it came down on the plateau and repeated the exercise several times until it gave up of exhaustion. There was even a reverse waterfall. A waterfall that went up instead of down, forced by the high velocity winds coming up from the valley, the water rose up in a fifty feet high spray.

WHITE BRESTED WATER HEN lives in a thicket, it is a ground bird, i.e. one that generally moves on the ground. It is very vocal during monsoon time which is its breeding season. This unfortunate one was killed on the road at Malshej Ghat by a speeding truck.



A rare sight of **MATING GRASSHOPPERS.**

One morning, we got news that staff staying near the watertank collected a basketful of birds that had hit themselves on the watertank above. When we went in a group and questioned them, they suspected that something was wrong, they refused to show us the basket of birds, and claimed that they had released them. Probably 'chicken' meat for unsuspecting tourists — I had intended to photograph it. One suspects that the *'focus'* (as the local staff call the halogen floodlamp) is placed there to gather the birds. Survival of the fittest.....how beastly can we get!

Mr. Nitin Jamdar who has worked with the University of California's Bird Research Community Studies has this to say: "The majority of species that form part of this phenomenon are known to have a distinct migration during the monsoon. It is possible that the saddle of Malshej Ghat is the route that the birds take to descend to coastal areas". Nitin gives five factors (1) **Season,** (2) **Location,** (3) **Strong Winds,** (4) **Mist** and (5) **Bright Lights.** "One or a combination of factors are present at the other places, but the phenomenon does not occur there, it

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The **DEATHS HEAD HAWK MOTH** its deadly name is a misnomer and does not go well with this gentle creature;

occurs only at a specific time in the year at Malshej Ghat : *THE BIRDS ARE ALREADY THERE BECAUSE OF THE MIGRATION ROUTE AND ARE NOT ATTRACTED TO THE LIGHTS ONLY; BUT A UNIQUE COMBINATION OF THE ABOVE MENTIONED FIVE FACTORS.* The presence of birds in the area are due to the first two factors. The Monsoon migrants moving through Malshej Ghat are disoriented because of the mist and light and lack of visibility dash against any structure; therefore the bird strikes are accidental rather than purposeful hence it is difficult to accept the theory of suicide. However, more needs to be studied before any definite statement can be made".

Records over the years have shown that there were at times 50 different species dead in a 24-hour period; some of the species spotted were difficult to spot in the forest and here we have them in our hands. Amongst the dead birds found included the **Alpine Swift; Purple Moorhen; Pitta, Quail; Whistling Thrush; Green Pigeon; Drove; Pied Crested Cuckoo** and the **Banded Rail.**

One night when there was a power failure we had no lights at all in the entire resort; nobody complained, in fact, the night was much more lovely, romantic and enchanting.

During the monsoon, more than a dozen waterfalls come cascading down, here crowds congregate to have a bath. You can photograph these falls and have fun too by frolicking in the water pools under the falls. For a different effect, use of a tripod will enable you to use a slow shutter speed.

The nature photographer can get very colourful photographs, a macro lens would be ideal. There are litrally hundreds of colourful Moths some like the marbled **PYRALIDE MOTH** or the lovely blue-green **MOON MOTH** that has tiny moons on its body. You can photograph the **LEAF GRASSHOPPER** but before doing that, you will have to find it, as it looks exactly like a dried out brown leaf, another exciting insect is the **JEWEL BEETLE** its metallic parrot green, spotted with mettalic navy blue make one feel like collecting it, as it looks like a pretty jewel; do not kill this insect for your pleasure. The **CATACANTUS INCARNATUS** or STINK BUG's deep blood red and coal black, is more of a warning coloration but makes a pretty picture. There is also a variety of flora to photograph. **ASPARAGUS RACEMOSUS** locally known as SHATAVARI is in flower during the monsoon with tiny creamish flowers. It is a tree creeper whose tubers is good for male virility. It is also a good tonic, one spoon of powdered tubers added to milk is supposed to be a good tonic for womens menstural problems.

Another large pink flowering is of the **HILL CURCUMA SP.** or WILD

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TUMERIC whose rhizomes grow below the earth. In Assam I have seen Elephants feasting on them.

If you have missed photographying the lovely deep violet-mauve **KARVIA CALOSSA** which flowered last year, during to monsoon, its your bad luck, as it will next flower in the year 2,000, do not give up, your luck may still hold, you may still, find a few that missed the cycle last year.

Around the month of August, the migratory pink flamingoes start arriving at the *"jheels"* (large waterbodies). To see them, you will have to go to Khubi village which is a kilometer or two away from the Plateau; don't attempt to get close as they will only fly away; use of a minimum power of 8 x 30 binoculars would be ideal to watch them. For photographing flamingoes in all their glory a 300 mm telephoto lens is a must. An important point to note, is to remember to wear camouflage coloured clothes, like the speckled green and brown of the army uniform or if you don't have that, then, dark green or dark brown would merge well with the surroundings. I have seen tourists come in full white or bright colours like red and yellow, pitiously attempting to get close with disastrous results, never do that, you only deprive others of getting a chance to watch and record those spectacular birds.

From Khubi village, there is a pleasant pathway that leads up to a hill where you can get a spectacular panoramic photographs of the village and jheels below.

Dr. Dasgupta who is also a photographer/trekker, informs me that about 10 km away from Malshej Plateau is a place called *TITHVI* from where a pleasant path/track goes down the valley about 2 km to a village below which has a tea shop, from the valley you will get an unusual photograph of the Harischandragadh waterfall.

HOW TO REACH THERE :
Malshej Ghat is in Pune district. By road, it is 154 km from Bombay, the most convenient Rail/Road connection is KALYAN on Bombay's local Central Railway network. From Kalyan take a bus to Malshej Ghat via Murbad; you have to tell the conductor 'Ghat Matha' (top of the Plateau) the last bus is at 4 p.m. From Pune it is 164 kms via Alephata. State transport buses regularly ply from Bombay and Pune to Malshej Ghat. The postal address of M.T.D.C. resort here is : Post Khubi, Via Ottur, Dist. Pune - 412 409. General tariff is Rs 200 per room, and weekend tariffs are Rs 250.

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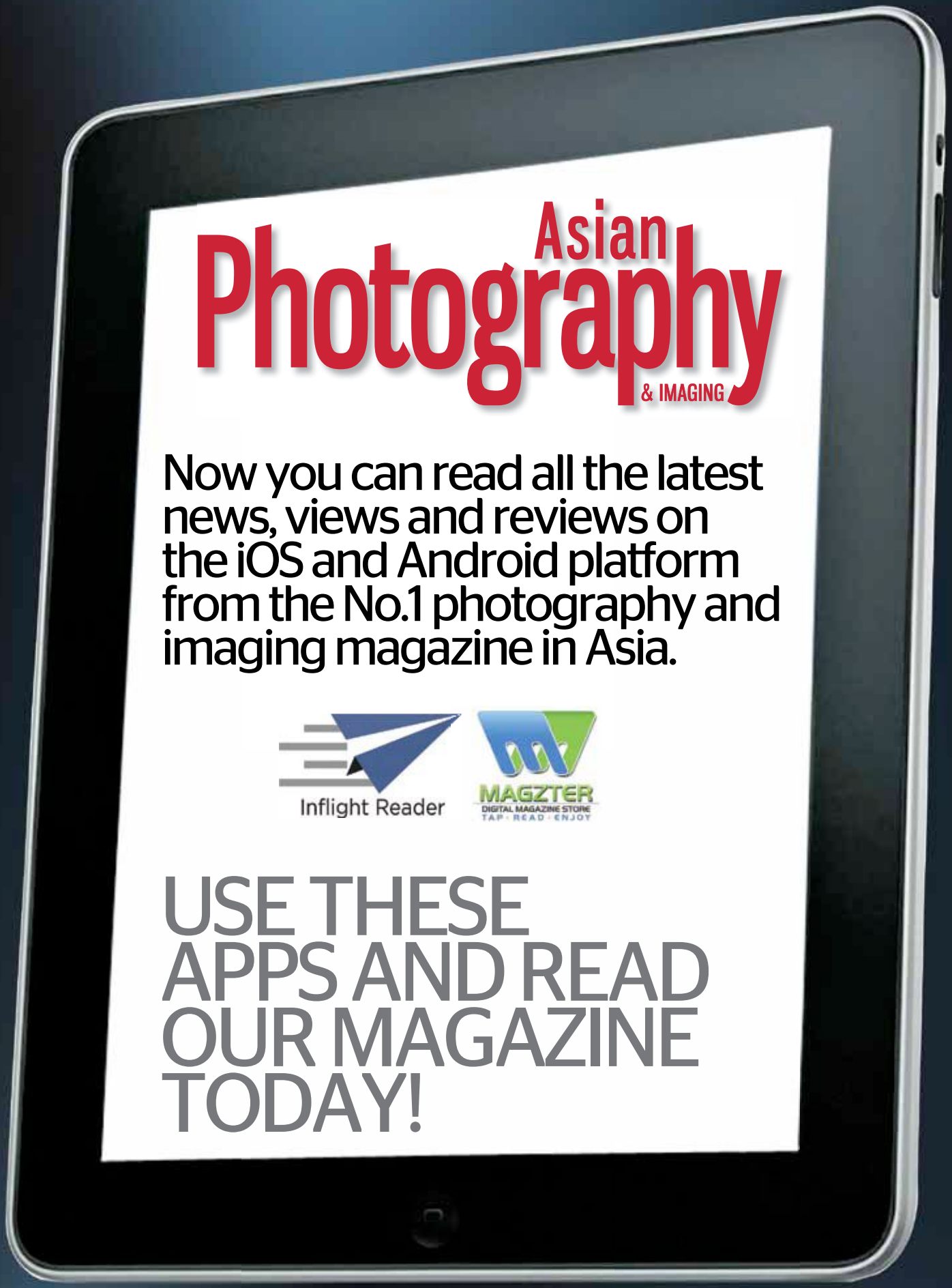
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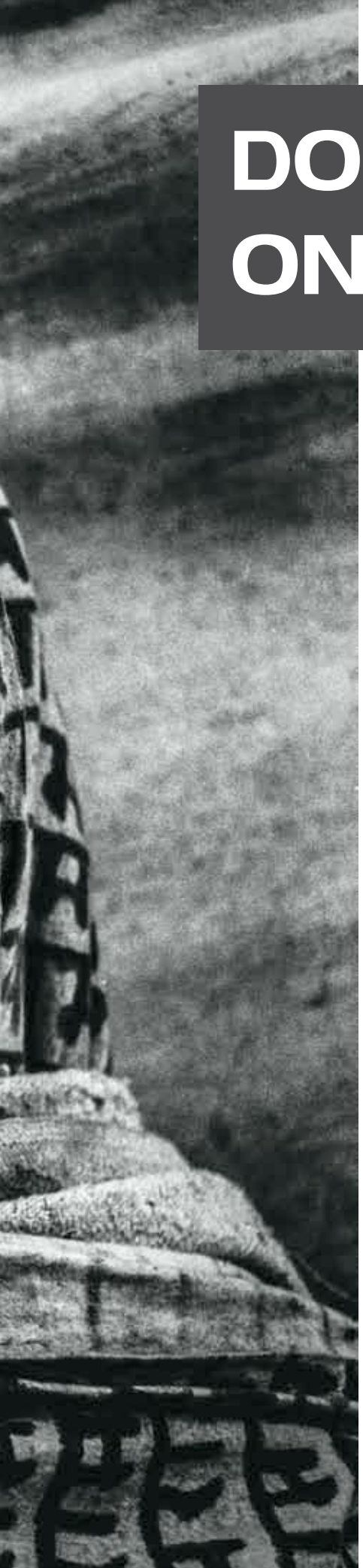


DOCUMENTING LIFE ON THE OTHER SIDE

Born in 1975, this French photographer started documenting his neighbourhood. He soon began working for a studio in the early 2000s in Paris parallel to his photographic studies in CIFAP. After years of working as an assistant for Patrick Swirc, William Klein and many others for magazines such as *Vogue*, *Flair*, *Elle*, *Vanity Fair*, his career as a documentary photographer began. In 2003 he teamed up with the agency Wostokpress and was sent to India as a correspondent. By 2007 he had founded the agency Trikaya Photos in India. He has shot multiple photo series on subject that are generally overlooked by the masses, from documenting the Narikuvars to the Ramnamis. This month we speak to **Yannick Cormier** about his striking series, and how his photographic journey has been so far.

How did photography happen to you? When did you decide to take it up professionally?

I was initially interested in visual arts, cinema and painting. In 1999, I started as a personal project with a compact camera on the immigration neighbourhood of Belleville in Paris. I focussed specifically on its inhabitants, streets and its painted walls. Later, I bought my first camera, a Nikon FM2. Since then, I constantly photographed this place till 2003. I grew up in this place, I wanted to show and capture my immediate environment. From the outset, the people, with their fragility and their dignity, interested me. I knew immediately that I had found my way; my life's work would be to be a photographer. Becoming a professional was the logical path, and in 2003 I became part of *Wostok Press* (French news agency).

Did you have any mentors or someone who inspired you during your early days of photography?

Before starting to take photographs I was already fascinated by the work of the American photographer Edward Sheriff Curtis and by the

French photographer Willy Ronis. In 2000, I met Marc Garanger who had done a considerable work on the war in Algeria in the 60's. I presented my work to him and he did not say anything except that I had to keep going, so I followed his advice.

What would you say your aesthetic or style of photography is; would you call yourself a documentary photographer?

My aesthetic is due to the materials that I use i.e. a medium format camera 6x6 with black and white films. I call myself a 'photographer' and I feel it since the last two years. My method is that of a documentary photographer or a journalist for whom investigation and reality cannot be circumvented. But I never take any photographs only as a document. Rather, I try to find something poetic in what I am photographing.

What sparked your interest in this genre of photography, over other genres?

I see my photography as a story dating new people and their culture. It is necessary to establish certain complicity with the people I photograph, and that's what interests me.

Tell us a little about your documentary images/projects. What have been the ideas behind them?

My body of photographic work takes interest in those forgotten by the Indian economic miracle. Of diverse indigenous communities, they are trying to ensure

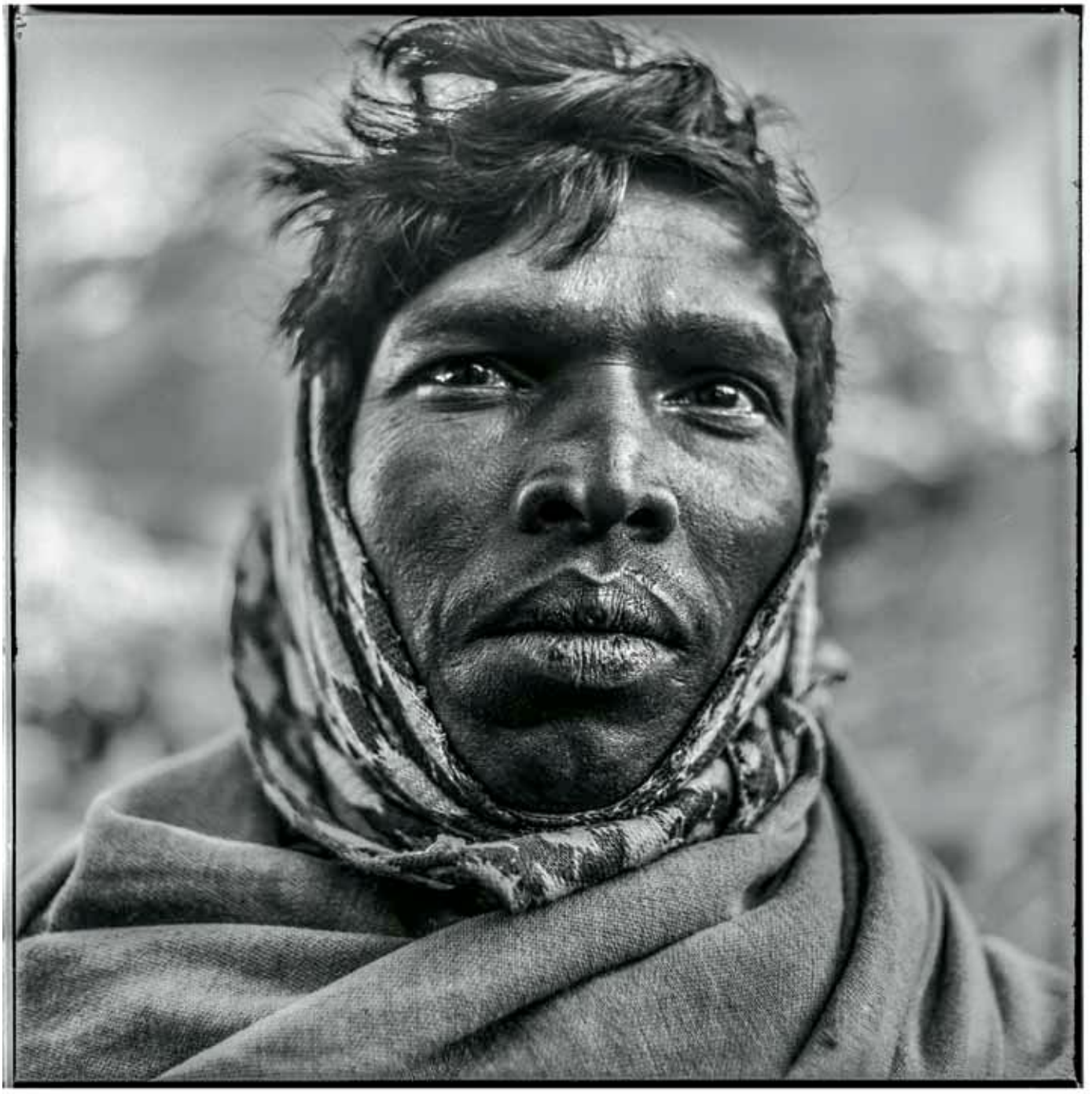
survival and continuity of their rites and traditions in the midst of an economic revolution and globalisation that is rapidly changing the face of this nation. I seek to testify in an aesthetic and sensitive manner, the tradition and genesis of a country. But what I find most interesting to photograph are the *Shaivite* rituals in southern India and this mystical side of life. If there's a ritual I like particularly during the *Dasara* festival at the tiny town of South Indian Kulasekarapattinam. Here, we take prayers' potent forms and people dressed as gods.

How do you come up with these ideas/topics? What inspires you?

First I feed myself with experiences, encounters, readings etc. There's also of course a lot of research on anthropological and ethnical topics from books I find, and on the internet, which gives me ideas to tell about a certain group but I have to find something that interests me and which is personal. There are so many things that inspired me but I would say that this is the visual art that inspires me the most.

What equipment did you learn on, and currently what are your weapons of choice?

I learned photography with a Nikon FM2 with a 50mm. Today I use only



a Mamiya C330 with 65mm and 85mm lens. Analogical photography gives me time for reflection, which allows me to work with my intuition.

What sort of preparation goes into your shoot?

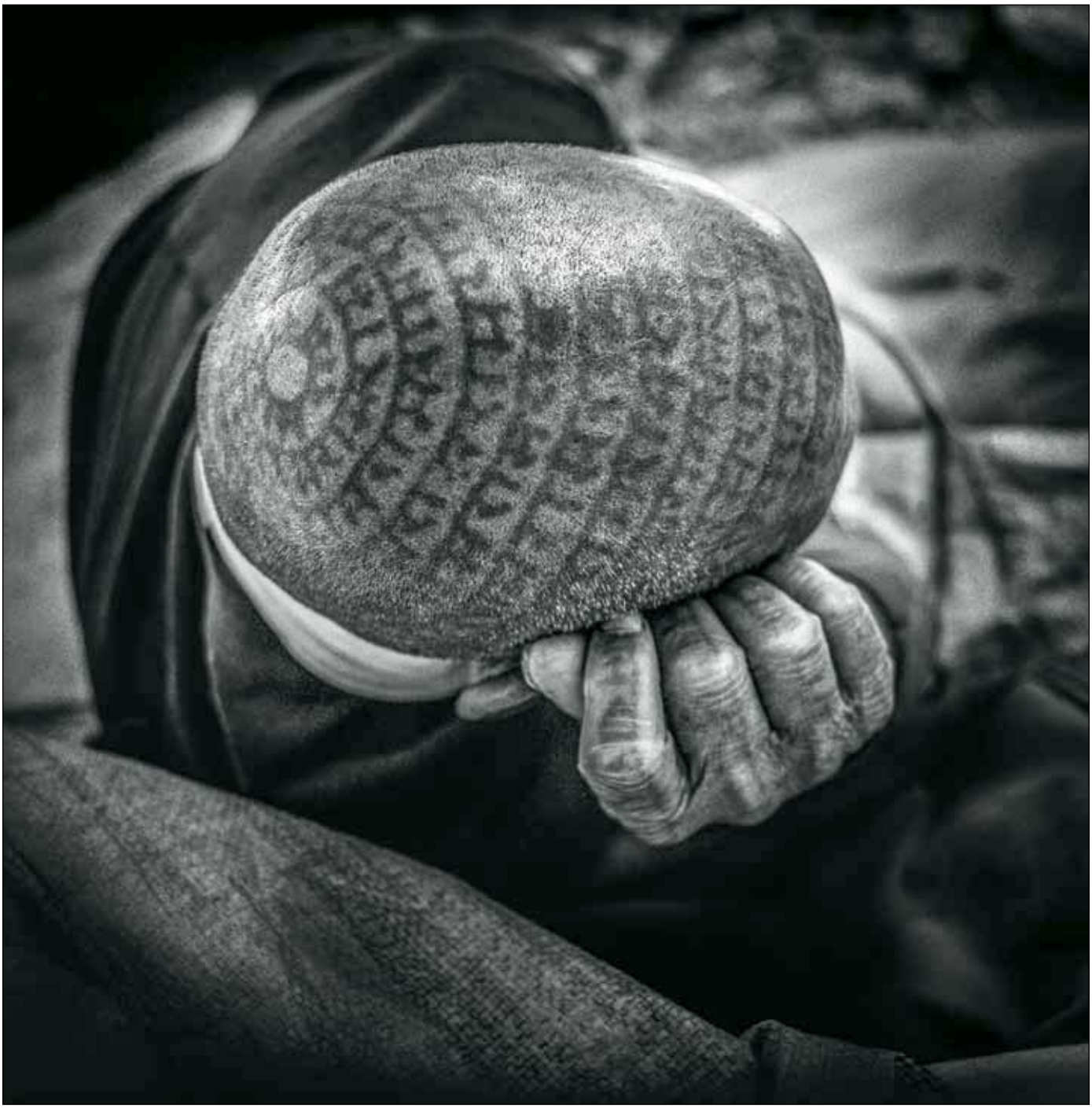
Mostly, I always have to find people who have the information I need. It is always the same question: Where and when? Because I generally know from before: why, what and who; and when I get all this information, I just go and shoot.

What are the main challenges in this genre of photography? What are the rewards?

The main difficulty in this kind of photography remains the economic reason. You know, since the beginning of my career, precariousness has never left. Thankfully, I can live with my photography which is a luxury today.

What have been some of your most memorable shoots and why? Give us some stories, we'd like hearing them. Which has been the most challenging shoot so far? Why?

Srinagar, Kashmir in July 2009, I followed the story Asrar Mushtaq Dar, a young student missing for several days. The day they found the body of Asrar, I was in the neighbourhood of Maisuma near the family house of



the victim. The uncle of Asrar invited me to take pictures to show their pain and I found in the garden about forty women mourning the death of the young man. This moment will remain engraved in my memory.

What are you currently exploring, any upcoming projects?

I'm currently working on two book projects. The first project called '*Ideas are like fish*' that goes on Java island where I walked in a territory that seemed to exist only in the form of inner visions. Even when I show things accurately, they are the opposite of a documentary approach. I have photographed an interior world of desires, visions and fantasies. The subject of my second project is a series on the rites and the traditions of the Dravidian populations through the Saivite/Shaivites religion and through its symbols. I started to work on it six years ago.

What would you like to advice to youngsters who are interested in entering the field of photography?

Be honest, keep it simple and keep on going. Work hard, and think how to articulate the work that makes sense. This is not only an advice for youngsters but also a reminder for me.

TEXT : ABHISHEK DESAI

Nikon

At the heart of the image

DAYARA BUGYAL

WANDERING IN THE MEADOWS OF UTTARAKHAND

When one thinks of Uttarakhand, vivid imagery of snow mountains, tall trees and people with rosy cheeks will come to your mind. This northern state of India is a traveller's sanctum and a photographer's paradise; a place I always longed to visit. An impromptu plan in June with fellow cousins to join Uttarakhand Tourism and GMVN (Garhwal Mandal Vikas Nigam) on their 'Trek of the Year 2015' expedition to Dayara Bugyal (a meadow situated in the Uttarkashi district of Uttarakhand) made me pick my camera and leave. Who could resist the temptation of photographing and backpacking through this beautiful location! The journey that followed the moment I reached this destination is simply incredible.

When I reached there, I breathed out a happy sigh. I had made it! I was here satiating my wanderlust: 11,050 ft. above sea level in one of the India's largest and lesser-explored meadows – Dayara Bugyal (*bugyal* is the Garhwali word for high-altitude meadows). I had come from urban chaos to surreal 'heaven on earth'. The campsite was my home for the next four days, and the 28 sq. km. vast expanse of Dayara Bugyal my tranquil paradise awaiting to be explored!

Every day, throughout our stay we would trek in different directions for about five hours and seven to eight kilometres. Each hiking stint would unveil the glorious beauty of the lesser Himalayas a little more, and surprises lurked at every turn and crossing. A walk through Oak and Deodar forests would suddenly open up into a bugyal, while the tallest hill climbed would suddenly seem miniature in front of the ones looming ahead. Some trails had a hill on one side and a flower bed growing on a steep slope cascading into the valley below on the other. In the most unexpected places lay fresh-water ponds reflecting the beauty above. Just as you got tired and decided to take a halt, fluffy shepherd dogs would come bounding by, wagging their tails with such excitement that you would forget all your tiredness, muster all the energy to move on. Sometimes, we ran out of water but sooner or later we would hear a stream gurgling nearby that would soothe our parched throats with delicious cold water. Never had I seen prettier natural drinking water sources before!

For miles together, there would be no humans in sight, apart from our small group of eight people and one guide. It felt liberating to come from the hyper-chaotic metros of the country to this epitome of calmness. Occasionally, we would come across a clearing with a cluster of tall fir and pine trees. Nestled under the shade of these trees would be a quaint little hut made out of wood and bamboo with a thatched roof. These huts belonged to the nomadic shepherd tribe – the Gujjars. The Gujjars are wanderers belonging to the pastoral agricultural ethnic group who roam across mountains with their cattle and come to Dayara during summers. Most of those found in Dayara

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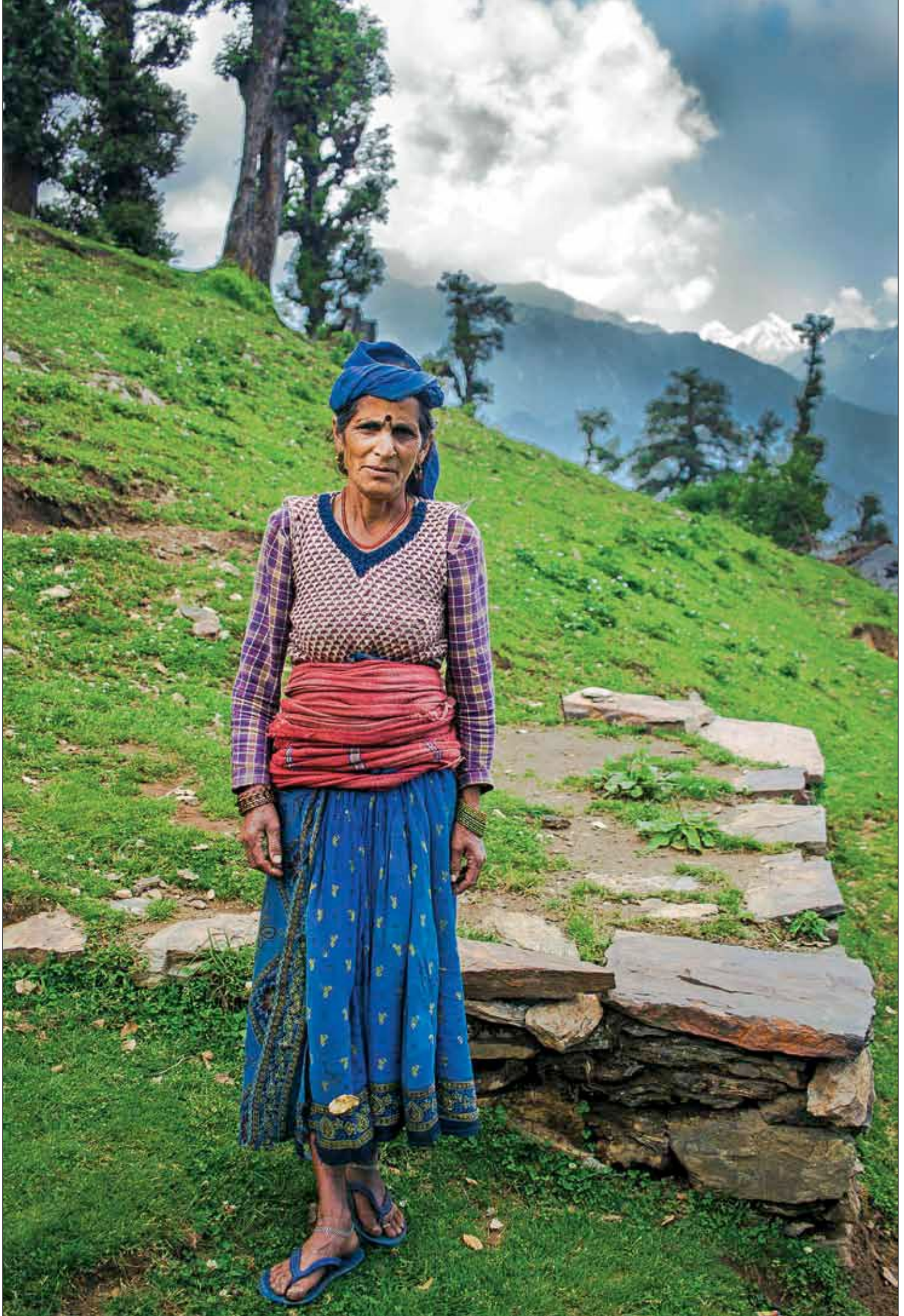

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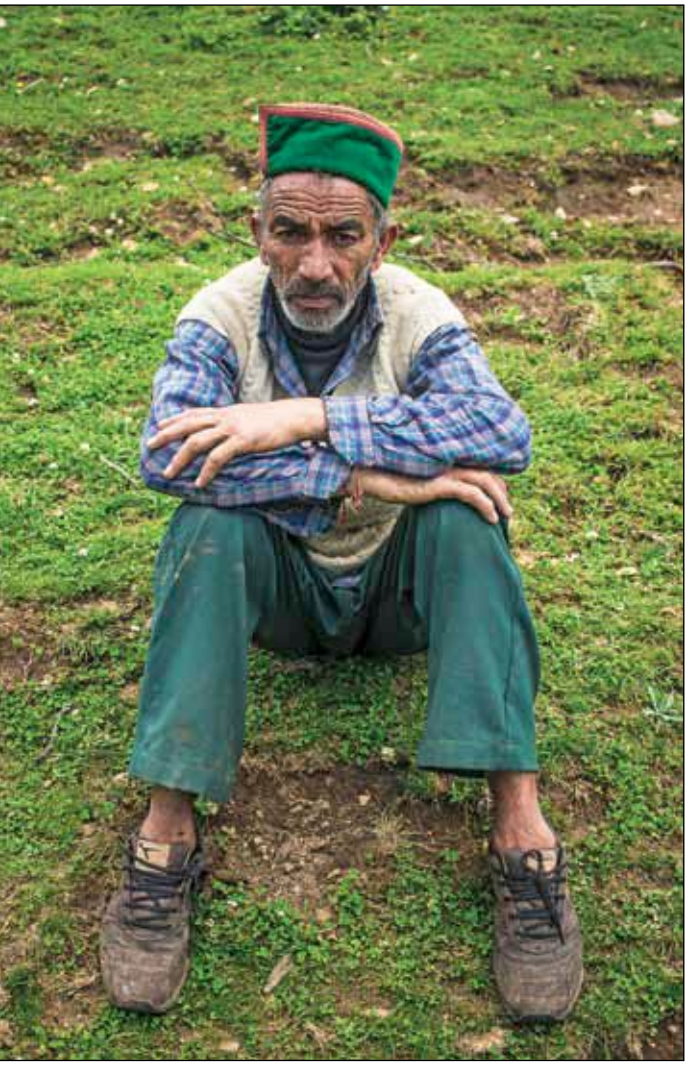
HOW TO GET THERE

Nearest Airport:
Dehradun (Jolly Grant Airport)
Nearest Railway Stations:
Haridwar and Hrishikesh
A day long journey to reach the base village, Raithal (Bhatwari, dist. Uttarkashi).

Bugyal follow Islam, have a language of their own but also know Garhwali, the local language. The Gujjars interact with the locals from the base villages only for trade purposes and otherwise prefer to be isolated and distant from the world. We were lucky to have a friendly guide who was well-accepted by the Gujjars around our trekking route; we got treated to fresh organic buttermilk, the tastiest I have ever sipped.

While climbing to Dayara from the hamlet Raithal and while descending from our campsite to another base village named Barsu, we met a lot of very friendly local people. They were families from these two villages who would get their cattle up to the meadows for grazing. Dressed in typical warm Garhwali outfits, these people were swift-footed and cheerful. The glint in their eyes, their warm smiles and the wrinkles they get at a young age add to their charm and enhance their beauty.

This destination had turned out to be a dream spot for photographers. Armed with my gear, I marched, trekked and camped in the wilderness making memories. My photography gear for this trip was rather an unusual mix. While I carried my DSLR, I left out the classic 50mm and packed a 24mm prime instead. This gave me the flexibility to capture great landscapes and crisp portraits, alike. I also carried one telephoto lens to capture the glaciers in the distance. I left out the tripod as it was too bulky to carry while backpacking. While hiking, not every time can you break the rhythm and take out your camera to capture the beauty around. Nor can the diehard photographer in you miss out on capturing those picturesque moments that make the journey so memorable! A compact camera or a phone gives you the freedom to



record your entire journey without stopping your feet.

June-end marks the last few days of summer in Uttarakhand. But up in the meadows, we couldn't abandon our woollen wear even when the sun shone. It was perpetually cold but the weather would change in minutes. We would walk for miles and miles in the fog losing hope to catch a glimpse of Banderpoonch glacier and other Himalayan peaks, but just then the mist would clear and the peaks would sparkle in golden sunshine. Another breathtaking moment we witnessed was when we were standing upon a hillock overlooking our campsite and we saw two clouds running towards each other, colliding into one. After that, the view was lost in the fog and it rained. The weather cleared again during sunset and the sky was painted in breathtaking hues of blue, purple and pink.

Night time at Dayara Bugyal was another mystical experience. While it rained through most of the nights and we had to lie in our tents humming to the pitter-patter of raindrops and distant cowbells, our last night was special. It was full moon day. The sky was clear and the moonlight brought the snow peaks to life. They seemed surreally close to us and all we could do was gape in pure amusement. I wished to steal a little bit of this magic and take home. I set up my camera on an empty LPG cylinder (thanks to the cook), my makeshift tripod for the moment and froze that moment forever!

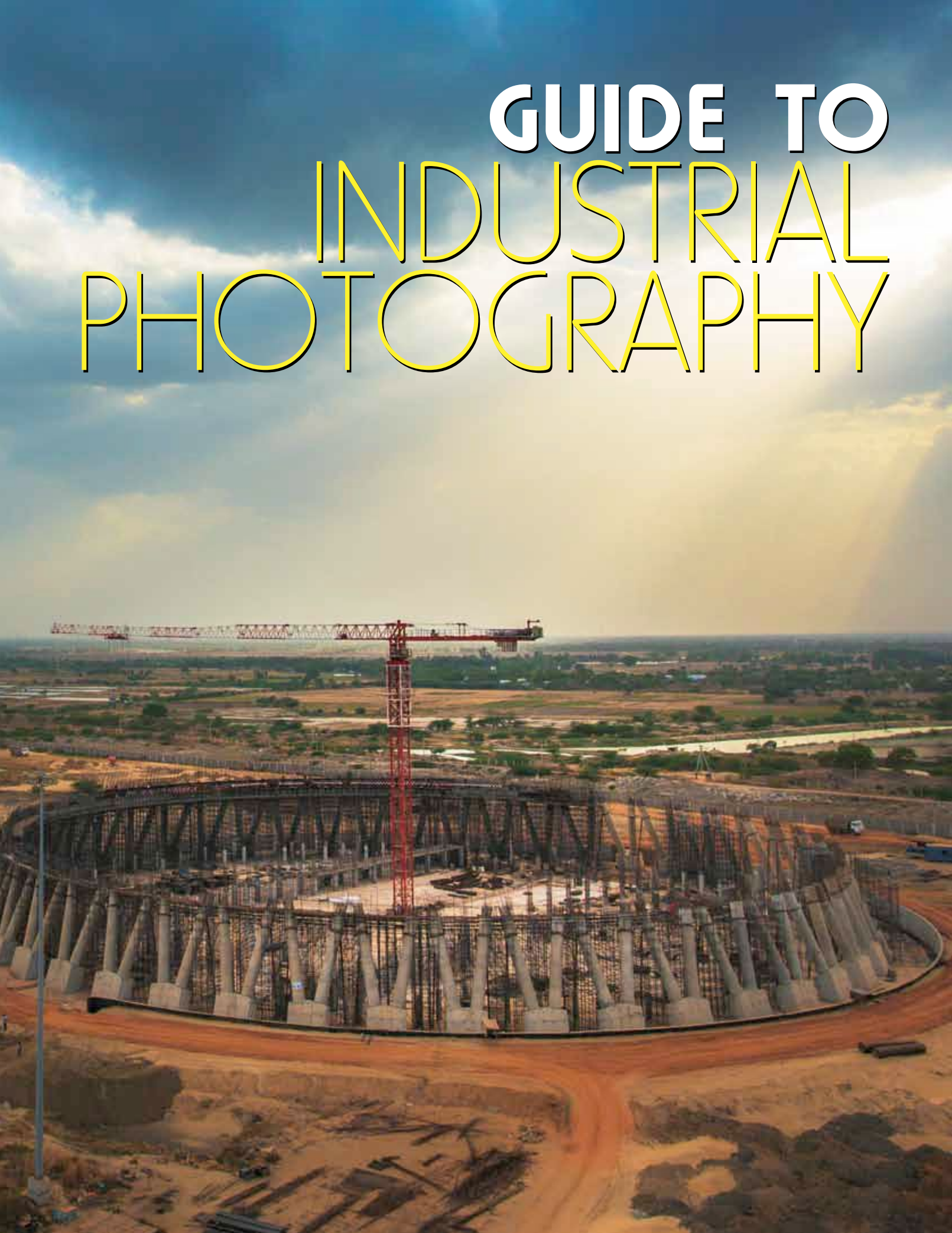
What followed this was another unforgettable sunrise. But waking up to stunning sunrises had now become a habit and it was time to go. We bid farewell to Dayara Bugyal and descended in the village of Barsu. We ached for our sleeping bags and the mountain air as opposed to the warm beds that awaited us. Today too, I greet the meadows very often; in my dreams and through my photographs.

Experiencing wanderlust? The next best season for travel photographers to visit Dayara Bugyal is in the winter months of November to February. Around this time, the meadows experience snowfall and skiing activities take place. One can experience an HD-like view of the Greater Himalayas, thanks to do the absence of haze and mist. So, pack your bags for the winter, haul your camera and head to Dayara Bugyal to make the most stunning pictures of snowcapped peaks and glaciers!

TEXT AND IMAGES: NIKITA VHORA (NEQUESTA)

Nikon
At the heart of the image

GUIDE TO INDUSTRIAL PHOTOGRAPHY



Unlike other genres of photography, industrial photography is more challenging and involves covering large objects into a frame. These photographs are generally of products, equipment, machinery, workers, and company officials – the term environmental portraits is something that came into trend because of such company official portraits.

The machinery and the structures may not be very eye-catching to a normal person, so it's the photographer's job to make the photographs enticing. Thus, a lot of thought process goes into a single shot. They have to be interesting and attractive so that they capture the attention of the viewers. Here are a few tips and tricks that help the industrial photographer take great shots:

Exposure: Exposure is the key to industrial shots, and you need to have a thorough knowledge of how much light is too much. You should be able to accurately measure the brightness of light, and explore the availability of light normally associated with the industrial areas that you are shooting. Practical as well as theoretical knowledge of exposure plays an important part in such pictures. Most of the time these lights don't play a vital part in your composition and you might need to cut to it through with a cutter or bounce it with a reflector.

Location Recce: Recce plays an important part to have a clear idea about the place and the people that you are shooting. Get familiar with the object and its surrounding by visiting and asking the manager to give you access to the area prior to the shoot. Ask them to clean the machinery so that there are no oil and/or grease marks. If it is needed, also request that the necessary paint jobs or any other adjustments be made before the date of the shoot. It is very important that

you do some preshoots using a small digital camera while you are on your Recce; it helps you frame the shots before hand. Doing a preview of the area will help you to identify the scope of preparation the object and/or area will need. Reshoots for industrial scenes are expensive and disruptive to the production process so you will want to get it right the first time. If people will be included in the shot make your request for them to be in the worker overalls and safety gears. If there are no overalls, then ask that they wear a suit and hard hat, which is generally how a static shot goes.

Clean up! Make sure that the machinery is extremely clean inside and out. Yes, post production helps you take out unnecessary things off the frame, but it might not be possible on every part of the machine. Ask your client to have their employees clean the equipment as well around the system before the shoot, for better shots and less stress during post production of the images.

Get up high: One of the best ways to capture the scale and complexity of any industrial machine is to photograph it from an upper angle. Now remember, climbing on a 2 foot ladder won't work here, you need to get way higher to get a composition with each and every bit of the subject in the frame. Many factories will have gang ways or rooms, such as a lunch room, built above the work floor. Often you can find a perch with a strong footing to take your picture. If you have to use a scissor lift, watch out for vibration; it will test the image stabilisation of both your camera and lens to an extent that it's never tested before.

Patience: Make sure you plan the time of your shoot very well and close. Large industrial projects require many photos from the standard large overview shot to the more detailed images. Keep in mind that many if

not all of your pictures will require long exposures. This is not like sports photography where you snap hundreds of images in the matter of minutes. This genre of photography requires much more time and patience than any other large scale projects you take up. Patience is the key, so avoid rushing while taking any shots. There are no shortcuts in industrial photography.

Equipment: Everyone knows how to switch on a camera and shoot, but do you know all your equipment good enough to carry out an industrial shoot? We often come across articles on the internet about f-stops and finding the right f-stops for our pictures. Well, this process gets critical while shooting industrial photos. The ability to capture details through the full image is essential to getting a great shot. So take the time to read up on your lens and then test out the various aperture settings. Take photos of parking lots if you have to just simulate the space you'll be photographing and test. Once you know the sweet spots for your lenses write them down and keep them handy.

Taking the shot: You can record an artistic blur by using slow shutter speed and capture movement. If there are shadow areas in or around the image, you can use reflectors to fill in the shadows and achieve what is required. The tripod is absolutely essential to keep the camera steady while taking industrial shots. Remember, industrial photography is more about sharpness and deep depth of field where everything in your frame has to be focussed. That makes an industrial picture perfect with all the elements that are required.

Lighting and contrast: Industrial areas usually have a lot of fixed number of light sources which can make your shoot a little difficult to tackle. The focus of the shoot will be large machines which are made out of steel and will reflect such lights. Using artificial lights will be a huge challenge here too. Taking the shots on an overcast day

will help to reduce the amount of reflection you will have to deal with. Cooler tones work best in this type of environment. If you are required to take exterior pictures of the building you can take advantage of the lighting that is provided on the industrial plant.

The greater advantage may be taking the shot at dusk. Using high contrast mode for industrial pictures will often produce better results. Set your camera to the correct mode before taking the shots. If there is a lot of steel, use apertures of f8 or above for your shots, so that you get the correct exposure and depth of field.

Post Production: While framing a shot make sure that you leave less room for post production. Try to get your shots as close as you can to your perfect frame. Just like wedding photography, the final product of your project will include a lot of pictures and you don't want to put in most of your time on post production. While shooting try and utilise as much time as you can to compose. Slight, minor tweaks like contrast, saturation and brightness can be worked up on later.

Similar to other areas of photography, industrial photography is challenging, but definitely not impossible for anyone to get it right. As we always say, using the right techniques makes anything achievable, so practice and keep exploring. Until then, Happy Shooting!

TEXT: USHMA DHAMDHERE

IMAGES : PRATIK PADHYE

Asian Photography & IMAGING

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Setting your first outdoor fashion shoot

Getting into the world of fashion photography can be a tricky business. In a market full of big-budget, high-conceptual shoots, it can be hard to find a way in and make your mark, but no one starts at the top. As a photographer, you'll need to prove you can produce high quality imagery before someone gives you a chance. Here are few basic tips to help you out setting your first fashion shoot – outdoor.

Get your theme right: The first step to any photo-shoot is to decide the theme. Fixing your theme determines all your other choices including makeup, styles, models and location. The theme can be anything from something simple to crazy. You can start with a simple idea like "a high-contrast shoot". From just the theme we can come up with some concept, like a young girl posing freely, and when it comes to styling we can imagine pastel bright colours, skirts and dresses to bring up the contrasts. Location can be a park or an empty space with elements in the background. Don't get too complicated with everything - just come up with a simple idea and then organise everything else to fit your vision with the flow. Remember this is our first shoot and we are exploring the horizon. We don't want to put

our best and have nothing at the end, so plan accordingly. Most of the professionals go by this.

Storyboard it: An essential step in the preparation for any fashion shoot are storyboards that pin down your concepts and communicate them to the rest of your fashion shoot team, if you are working with one. A storyboard is something that captures the mood and workflow of your shoot before it even happens. These are basically the sketches in which you plan out the photographs you want to create during the shoot this includes styling, hair, framing etc. Do you want a close up, medium or wide shot? How will the models be posing? How will they be positioned within the frame? Will they have props? These are all things to include in your storyboards!

Models: Models can often either make or break the shoot. Depending on your theme, you should decide on the look she or he should have. Think whether they should have any specific features (tattoos or no tattoos) or abilities (e.g. dancing) that would be useful for the shoot. But first things first, since it's our first shoot - how do we find models? Professional photographers often go straight to modelling agencies which make the process of choosing models easier, and more reliable. Unfortunately, it's not very budget friendly so you go ahead and chose and explore some free alternatives. Hiring a model will cost you, so try and remember interesting faces that you come across on a day-to-day basis. Lately, you don't have to go out of your home to find these faces, all you have to do is post a word on Facebook and responses are phenomenal. Your friends and family are another option; even if they don't look like supermodels, fashion is for people of all ages. You can even stop people on the street if you see someone absolutely incredible. With such means finalise your model and then you are good to go. For the first few photo-shoots we'd recommend working with just one model, as organising more than one model to pose will become a lot difficult to organise. There's no harm in going big if you have the confidence. But if you ask us – experiment with less resources at first and then go ahead with large-scale shoots.

Location: Now that you have chosen your theme, you know the kind of location you would want to go ahead with. Fix it and take a walk around, a day prior to the shoot. Mark the area which suits your framing the best. Now the location can be close to your home or someplace no one else has explored. Make a list of 'easy' locations that you already know and then decide what level of challenge you are up for when it comes to the location!

Sourcing: Consider the theme and atmosphere of the shoot you are working on. Describe and visualise the looks of your final image when it comes to shape, patterns, textures and fabrics. And the next step is to figure out what sort of styling you can get your hands on - borrow from friends and family members and scour for unusual props and accessories that could bring your shoot to life. Easy way

to pick something that suits your model for generic themed shoot is to get styles out of their own wardrobe. You could even think about customising or making your own clothes, props and accessories with your fashion shoot with help of someone who knows about styling or by researching about it online. You can do this all on a shoe string budget - just pull in some favours and be inventive!

Make up/hair styling: The first thing to figure out here is are you going to the job on your own or are you taking help from someone else who knows more about it? We would suggest not filling your plate with a lot of things. However, if you go around with this aspect, remember that the most important thing in a fashion shoot is makeup-hairstyling complementing the styling and your model. You have to make it a point that whatever you do, it goes with your theme and it's not something haywire; the makeup and hair styling needs to compliment the theme of your shoot. It's always good to get some designs down on paper while doing the storyboards and get everything sorted before the shoot.

Equipment: No matter what camera you are using - from a camera phone to a DSLR - make sure your battery is fully charged and your lens is clean from smudges, so you can shoot for as long as it takes. Carry extra batteries and cards during the shoot. A basic kit-lens with a normal DSLR body or Mirror less camera with a kit lens are more than enough to carry out your first shoot. Save money and refrain yourself from hiring equipment that you can do without on your first shoot.

Edit: A fashion shoot is never over after the shoot. A very important stage to make your package complete is the post-production. Always make a 'Rough Edit' folder on your computer, put the pictures you feel are perfect for final product in a sub folder and edit them generously, because this is the first edit that you are making. Think about which images work together to tell a story. Think about composition, facial expressions, the body language, the styling and the lighting. Then step away from the computer - come back the next day and edit further into a 'Final Edit' folder with your final best shots in. Be ruthless at this point! Sometimes, less can say more.

While shooting, don't get overexcited and forget all about your storyboard, theme and concept altogether. Follow your ideas so you don't get stuck or go off on a completely different tangent. Your storyboard is your first priority in which your shoot would go. Once you exhaust all the ideas and composition that you work on, you can go ahead and experiment in your time. There's so much to think about on the actual shoot, remembering your original ideas on paper will really help you to get the shots you wanted. So always carry those notes. These are the basic things to remember while fabricating your first fashion shoot as we always say, experiment and explore and you shall excel. Until then, Happy Shooting!

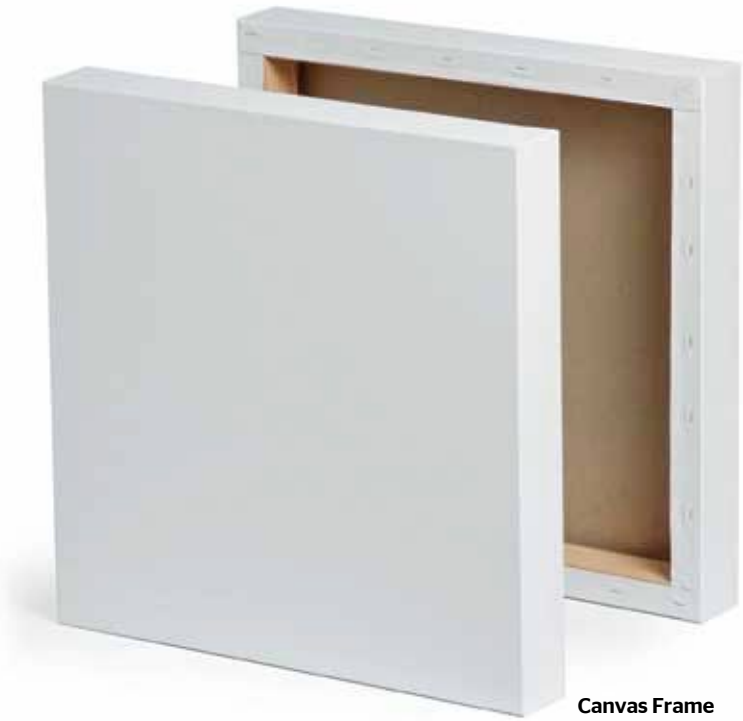
TEXT: USHMA DHAMDHERE
IMAGES: SNEHY SINGH

The arrangement of frames create a big difference in how the final exhibit looks

Selecting the best **frame** for your photograph

Every photographer dreams of exhibiting his photographs at least once in his lifetime, but it is not an easy task. There are a lot of parameters that come into play while preparing for an exhibition, including financial, logistics and artistic decisions. As Artistique 2015, the third edition of *Asian Photography*'s own exhibition to promote photography as an art form, kicked off, we thought that beginners should have a sneak peek inside what thoughts go into deciding on frames for the exhibiting photographs.

Before you go into the smaller details of choosing the right frame decide on what the end-use will be. A photograph once printed can be used for two different things – personal use or professional use. An exhibition can fall under both these categories, so it is very tricky and one needs to make up his/her mind about the print's end-use beforehand itself. If you are planning to sell your photos from the exhibition, then the idea behind choosing frames will be different than if you are planning to keep it for yourself.



Canvas Frame

PERSONAL USE

If you are printing a photograph to hang it in your living room, bedroom or your office wall you have much more freedom to customise the frames to your own liking taking into account the wall space, colour of the wall, overall ambience of the room etc. You can go for a shadow-box frame, if the intent is to have one single big photo display on a single surface of the wall. You can have curved edges or a box type frame where the edges are sharp. There are endless possibilities to this as it is up to you and your liking completely. Make sure that the frames are not loud and do not take away the attention from the picture itself. Choosing a single colour block frame is better as it emphasises on the picture and not on the frame.

PROFESSIONAL USE

If the end use of your photograph is to sell them to art collectors or relatives or friends in the photography industry, or even if you intend to just exhibit the photographs, there are certain things you have to keep in mind. The first, and the most important thing, is to see what type of photo it is. Photo frame choices vary a lot when it comes to black and white and colour photos. While a black and white photo would look better with both black and white solid colour frames, a colour photo would look much sober with a white solid colour frame. To decide what looks best with your photograph, you can actually design a frame in Photoshop to check, or go to a framer and look at the frame samples to be certain. A low-key black and white photo will look better with a thin black box type frame

How a framer's workshop looks, different workstations deal with different aspects of framing and mounting

Box type square frames can be used for square images shot for instagram

while a high-key photo will look better with a white box type frame.

The colour and texture of the wall is also important, since coupled together with the photo frame they are solely responsible to bring out the best in your photograph. If the exhibiting wall is white then a white, black or wooden finish frame would look equally good, but some exhibition halls like the Victoria and Albert Museum in London has black walls as well, where a wooden finish frame would look shabby at best. If the wall is black or a darker shade of colour like grey or dark red, a broader white margin with a white or even a black border can look good sometimes. Now the question arises how a black frame can look good on a black wall. This brings us to our next point.

TYPE OF LIGHT USED

There are several types of lighting systems for exhibiting work, even in exhibition halls and personal room walls as well. Depending on the lighting system the frame colour and shape should be determined. A frame with greater width will look good with clamp spotlights, a bigger image that ends adjacent to the floor will look good with floor lights but only if the frame is narrow and simple. Too intricate a design can spoil a photograph. Track lighting systems are bound by the track that they are attached to, thus restricting the flexibility of the focussing area of the light.

FRAME SIZES, SHAPES AND TYPES

There are three aspects to framing a photograph that one has to keep in mind, namely – Front, Depth and type of frame. Front is the measurement of the width of the frame measured usually in inches. This is what defines if a frame is thick or thin. Depth is a very important aspect as well. If you intend to have a glass cover on your photograph, then you need a frame with more depth as a broader frame has chances of accommodating a layer of glass. If you want to frame

A frame can either take away or attract your attention to the photograph

A mount board cutout

Pre planning in terms of size of the exhibit is absolutely essential

your photograph without a glass covering, then you can opt for a thinner frame. The third biggest aspect of frame specification is the type of frame. While different companies have different codes for frame shapes, one can easily see their catalogue and choose the right frames for them. A box-type frame is very common among photographers since it is very simple and does not draw attention to the frame itself. It merely emphasises the importance of the photographs.

While this article will guide you on the basics of framing there are a lot of variables related to choosing the frame. Thus it is best to consult with the framer and have a basic idea of your own. Keeping in mind the fact "Simple is better" is what will help in the long run. Simple colour, simple design and a simple white mount bring out the best in photographs. With new technologies evolving, new materials being used for frames and hooks and mounting and photo paper it is an ever growing industry and one must keep updated if he or she wishes to exhibit his or her work.

TEXT: SOURADEEP ROY

Creative Camera Shake

Unwanted camera shake is a nightmare for photographers most of the time, but some embrace it to create beautiful photographs or photo art. If used in the right environment it can lead to beautiful painting like images that one can use as a medium of expression. We have previously discussed how to avoid camera shake and it would be unfair not to discuss how to use camera shake creatively as well.

PHOTO: ABHISHEK DESAI

PHOTO: SOURADEEP ROY

WHAT IS CAMERA SHAKE?

Camera shake simply put is shaking of the camera at the moment of taking a photograph. No matter how fast the shutter speed is, if there is a camera shake it can be seen on the final image and nothing in the frame will be sharp or in focus. Camera shake is frowned upon in certain genres of photography like Photojournalism, advertising or wildlife but it has exceptions. Photographers can sometimes break the boundaries and decide to shake the camera intentionally. But there has to be a reason for doing so, without which the entire process loses originality. Some beautiful pieces of art have been created using this technique and one needs thorough practice to master it without the risk of being called pretentious.

PHOTO: SOURADEEP ROY

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CAMERA SHAKE AND BLUR?

People tend to think that blur and camera shake are the same thing because they are quite similar looking and rightly so. But there is a huge difference between the two. Blur is caused by slow shutter speed and a moving subject while camera shake is caused by the movement of the camera itself. A blurry photo will have parts of it in focus – the parts that are still and not moving. But a photograph which is a result of camera shake will not have anything in the frame in focus. This is because at the time of exposure, the camera's sensor itself moves, and not parts of the subject or frame. The patterns and shapes on the final image will depend on how the camera moves and what the photographer is shooting. However, one can wish to combine both camera shake and blur to create effects that cannot be created with a steady camera.

HOW TO COMBINE BOTH?

This is the best use of creative blur, since combining both, you get a layer that is partially in focus, and on top of it you get a layer of shaky, blurry effect. It looks surrealistic and it can be used creatively to express different emotions, actions or feelings in photographs. The best way to

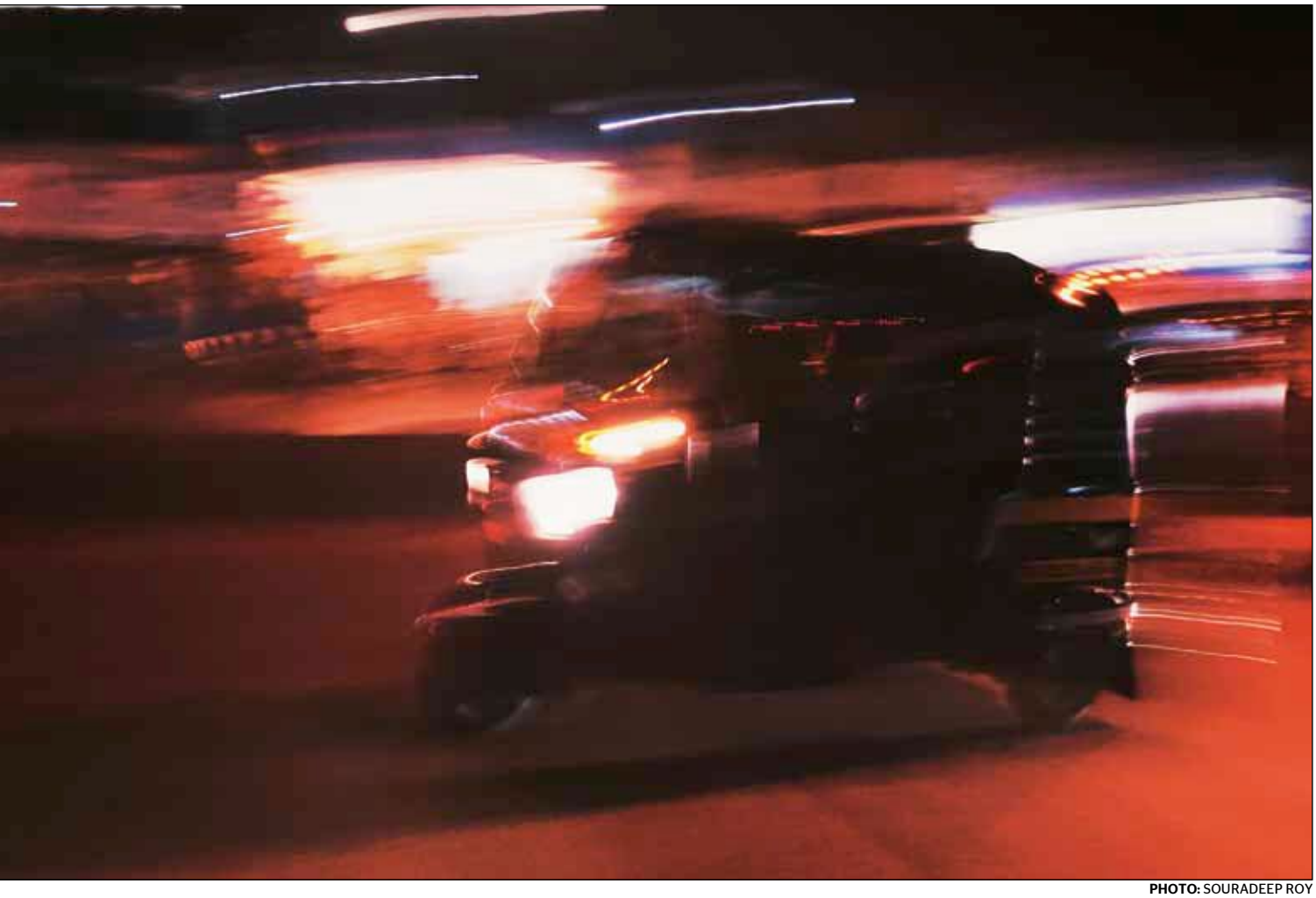


PHOTO: SOURADEEP ROY

combine both is to keep a slow shutter speed, and then keep the camera steady for half the duration of the shutter

PHOTO: PURVA DAMLE

open time and then shake the camera. What this does is create a layer of perfectly exposed photo, and on top of that a shaky unclear layer of the same surrounding on top. Sometimes it looks quite stunning and eye catching and sometimes it looks like paintings as the camera shake adds what looks similar to brush strokes. The best way to practice is to go under a street lamp and try to do the same exercise. You will get the street lamp in focus and on top of it you will have light patterns when you shake the camera.

HOW TO USE IT CREATIVELY?

There is a very thin line between shooting camera shake creatively and failing horribly at it. One needs to practice a lot before displaying any work on this. But once mastered, it can increase one's creativity and freedom of expression to a new height. The best way to start is to learn about paintings and how different brush strokes are used by different artists. It will help you to evolve a unique style for yourself. See how shaking the camera vertically affects your photograph and how shaking it horizontally affects your photograph. Use a table lamp and practice

PHOTO: SOURADEEP ROY

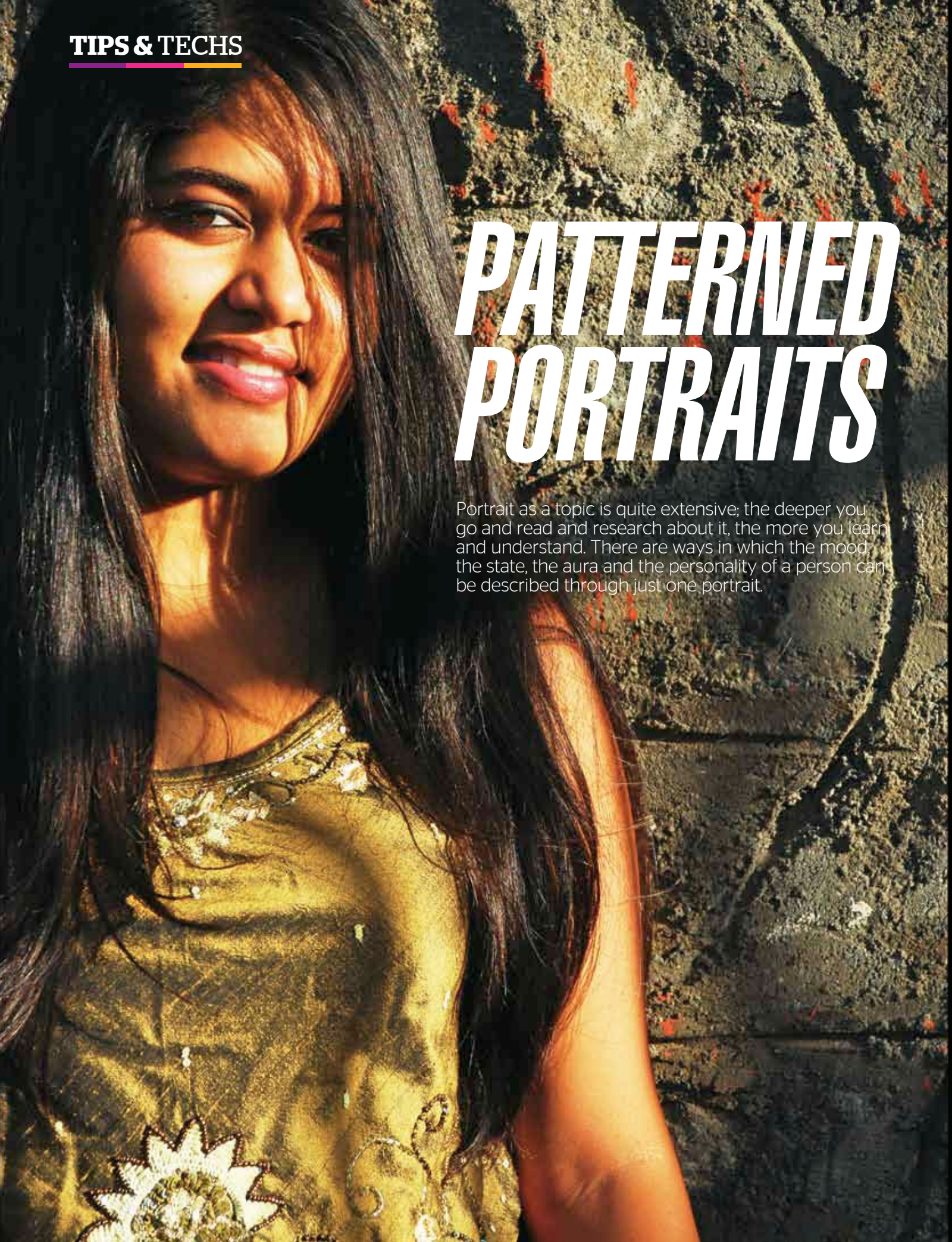
at home. You can also go out to different locations that are chaotic in nature, like markets, busy streets, train stations etc and try to uphold the chaos through your photographs. However, most of these photographs will not make sense as a single image, and need to be displayed in a series to tell a story. Each photograph in this article is a part of different series, and as you can see, they do not tell a story as singular images or even as a four or five image series. One needs to build a story around the same and it has to be cohesive, since the medium of expression – i.e. camera shake is not easy to grasp at one go.

WHEN AND WHERE TO USE IT?

Camera shake is anyway a difficult process to grasp, and to tell a story through it is even more difficult. One should know when and where to use it, to be able to successfully execute his or her thought process. When shooting using camera shake, make sure that the subject you shoot is not stagnant or boring. It has to be lively and chaotic. A dull subject will take away the excitement from the image, whereas a chaotic subject will be even more chaotic with blurry lines and light trails on it, just as a cycle or car looks faster when panned because of the motion blur. We often use it in parties where everything is loud and frenzied or at locations like train stations. There needs to be elements in your photograph that people can relate to or understand, not just random light trails. Having a blurry face or a shadow can enhance the photograph even more and people may relate to it. Use the surrounding light source to create beautiful light trails on your photograph.

At the end of the day, it is completely up to the artist's expression and how he or she perceives and communicates stories. A basic guideline in this article should help one to get started with this beautiful process. One should always remember that experimenting is the starting step to learning something new, and these small things may come in handy once in a while when you are shooting stories and trying to convey an emotion. Hope you find this article helpful, and keep on experimenting!

TEXT: SOURADEEP ROY



PATTERNED PORTRAITS

Portrait as a topic is quite extensive; the deeper you go and read and research about it, the more you learn and understand. There are ways in which the mood, the state, the aura and the personality of a person can be described through just one portrait.

There are ways you can make the portraits stand out. Like high key - low key, shadows, accessories used to portray the personality and much more. Portraits are supposed to elaborate the person's traits; focussing more on the personality, and not just on how he or she looks in the frame. The person may not even be completely seen in the frame, but the other things would make the portrait come alive. With contrasting amount of light and expression, a photograph can give out vast amount of feelings to the onlookers.

High contrast images may not be acceptable to all, in all genres. For that matter, literally the meaning of contrast is the difference in luminance or colour that makes an object stand distinguished. In visual perception of the real world, contrast is determined by the difference in the colour and brightness of the object and other objects within the same field of view. For some it might be a way of effective feeling or for some, a way of narrating a story. High contrasts generally define harshness or a very direct message. High contrast can be achieved in various ways and means. One of them can be with the use of patterns in creating portraits.

WINDOW PANES

Every culture which one comes across gives different arena of ways to make our houses and also the workspaces. Considering the places where we grow up and learn, the designing is accumulated within. When you observe the windows, doors, staircases and their shadows there are emotions which might be given out. The shadows, the angle in which the light enters these windows is fascinating. It gives a stand for a portrait where in these patterns are seen when such portraits are captured. Distance between the main source light and the angle in which the light comes in, determines the way shadows affect the composition and adds on to or subtracts the meaning of the frame made by the photographer. The opaque subject immerses out

with different shapes and sizes. Long shadows, short shadows, sharp shadows give out varied sentiments which act as accessories to the final portraiture.

TREES

Post 12 noon is the best time to get sharp, scorching shadows. The branches, tree leaves form such shadows which make fascinating patterns. Generally, post 11:30am to 3:30pm light is not really the light which a photographer looks for. However, when a photographer wants to find for some engaging patterns; the trees shadows make a very compelling subject. Trees provide one with shadows in such heat; when strategically observed they have intricate designs in themselves. With themes and concepts in mind one can surely show an intriguing mood by capturing the play of shadows.

WATER REFRACTION

Water has this distinct feature of refraction. The light when it hits the surface, when the water is moving and making its own space; water refracts back light and the light makes beautiful patterns on opaque surfaces. The wave pattern gives a very attractive glow on the surface of the subject. This reflection brings out a dreamy look, and this can be formed only when the water is in a moving condition and not still. The bright silver colour refraction can be strong for the human subject, but these light refractions bring superb patterns and can be gradually made into high contrasts if the waves are very much toned down and calmer.

TRANSLUCENT SURFACES

Translucent surfaces can be colourless or have tinge of colours. Tinge of colours like green, maroon, lime yellow and other interesting ones. If these surfaces have dents, or any other type of façade, they react to the light available around. Thus, there are lanterns or lights these days which provide you with translucent cuts, in which every angle gives a different type of light refraction. When these patterns collide they create distinct formations through which one can come across appealing outlines. One can also arrange for variant shades of colours which might be contrasting to the main translucent colour. It can be used to portray feelings through the medium of the subject's expressions and the colours to go with it.

PHOTO: VASEEM PATHAN

ACCESSORIES

Individual has his or her own personality. Along with the personality, come the accessories. From the accessories, an individual's speciality can be well recognised and analysed. Accessories then can be hats, scarves, jewellery and much more which can make the individual's face stand out, or even on other surfaces which add on to the overall personality of the frame. With longer shadows and broader surface areas, formation of shadows major into unending ways of creations.

As we read further about portraits, we come across painters used to ask the kings and queens to hold the most precious accessories when the painting was made. Most of them ended up using the swords; the queens were made to wear the precious jewelleries. Putting these stereotypes aside, the photographers started using shadows, everyday material to characterise the person. The character is as important as its settings which are designed for making a complete photograph. Observation of light and the placement of the available light or artificial light at a particular time is very important.

Every individual thing known to us comes in patterns. As all say our two fingers also have different patterns. Patterns surely draw a line between nominal photographs and those photographs which include designs or outlines. Here we discussed and gave more stress on the patterns which are used to make the frame more eye capturing.

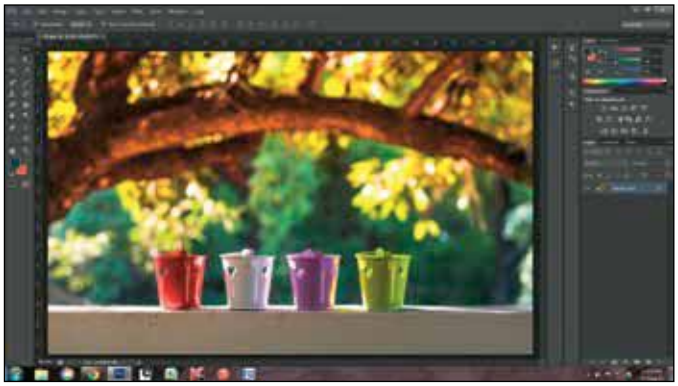
TEXT AND IMAGES: PURVA DAMLE

PHOTOSHOP'S EFFECTIVE BLURS

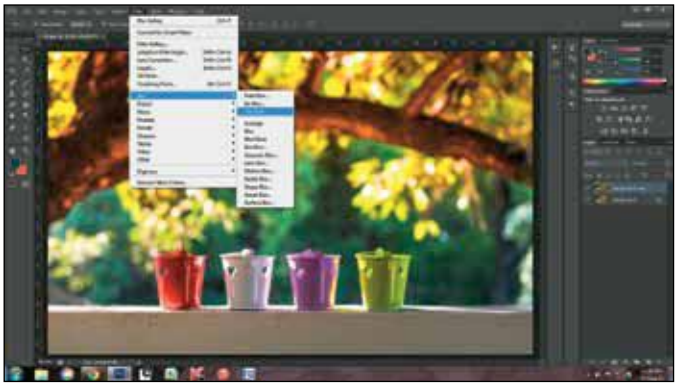
Adobe Photoshop came up with some brilliant filters and tools with their version '6'. With the black colour workspace, Photoshop changed its total look and added a few genuine filters and tools which would surely enhance the photograph as a whole.

Some of the major filters which struck the mind were the 'blur' effects. One of them was the 'iris blur' and the other one is the 'tilt - shift' blur. This tilt - shift' blur has basically been added to overcome the limitation of not having a tilt-shift effective lens for shooting.

The tilt-shift blur gives a beautiful miniature effect to your whole photograph. It superbly enhances the photograph and gives the difference with the help of just a few steps. This blur gives you a sense of depth in the photograph. With the help of this technique, the bokehs also can be improved and made more impactful or bright or even one could change the tone of them by adjusting the pins given in the adjustment tool window to the right.



1 Open the image which you feel you want to give the tilt-shift blur filter.



2 After the image opens, go to the Filter tab and select blur and then tilt-shift, should be chosen. Once you click on the chosen filter, the edit pin appears on the frame which is centrally aligned.

3 Adjust according to the subject which you want keep in complete sharp focus. Change the directions and choose the right amount of distance for gradual tilt-shift blur. While fine-tuning the amount of blur in the frame, I suggest you to check and re-check on the acceptance level of the blur. The blur, if excessively used, then it is well understood that it's been edited and worked on. The more elegantly done the more natural the image appears to the onlooker.

4 The use of the adjustment tabs to the right should be done in good proportion. One can also adjust the bokehs and the colours of it in there. When happy with the image and its edited version, click the ok or just press the enter key.

5 The blur effect is applied.

6 The final photograph is seen, and by merging the two layers, you can save the image and can see the difference after the 'tilt-shift' blur effect is given.

TEXT AND IMAGES: PURVA DAMLE

PROTECTING YOUR IMAGES ONLINE

001100011 - Along with the engineers, even the layman has in general started getting the hang of what encoding is all about! This is the way all of us are decoded and encoded in this digital world. All our fancy profiles on Facebook and best captured moments on Instagram are simply different type of codes saved, processed and shared through set of codes. These codes are eventually broken down to only two numbers – 0 and 1. Though, we are not really here to tell you about the binary and decimal coding!

The digital world supported by several online and offline software shave certainly simplified our job. Though, it has enriched the photography creativity, it is followed by some major drawbacks like stealing, duplication, plagiarism.

Piracy is a digital disease

For a passionate photographer, such acts and behaviour are highly annoying and disappointing. But, as an artist how much are we really able to take up the responsibility and bear the damages caused by these open violations of norms? Considering the strength and the activeness found on the social networking sites and websites available at affordable prices, one can get an understanding of the tremendous amount of plagiarism happening every minute. So, solutions to protect your data and mainly photographs have become even more crucial.

We thought, this time we should let our readers know how to avoid photography thefts – clicked by DSLRs specifically. We have put down faster and easier options as time and swiftness is extremely important. There are questions like, what are the ways we can make copying difficult? Or is there a different way of letting people see the photographs online but not download them? Yes, we do have the answers, but there are people out there who have got the solutions, or already know how to get past it by using the HTML that can track and get the photograph stolen right under your nose.

Copyright your photographs

Every country has law and order for protecting the people of their own country. One has to keep track of the amendments and also stay updated with the latest happenings in their industry. You can get your photographs registered and file your photographs with the government body which is responsible for taking care of such violations. The companies which these photographers and film makers tie up with also have several ways of protecting their property. There will be legal documents involved, so please read the rules and regulations, and then hit the accept button or sign on any such legal papers.

The photographers should add on to the copyright notice which should be mentioned in every photograph published. So mention the act name and the number and further details required.

You can also add your copyright name in the camera itself; the DSLRs come equipped with the metadata and you can add or remove the details. These help you to recognise when the photographs have been stolen.

The copyright automatically gets downloaded and stored in the HTML language. The thief is generally not aware of it and they don't really go in the details as they might go towards mass downloading. Later on, if you are lucky, they might not have checked the metadata. Deleting and substituting metadata of each image is not a quick process.

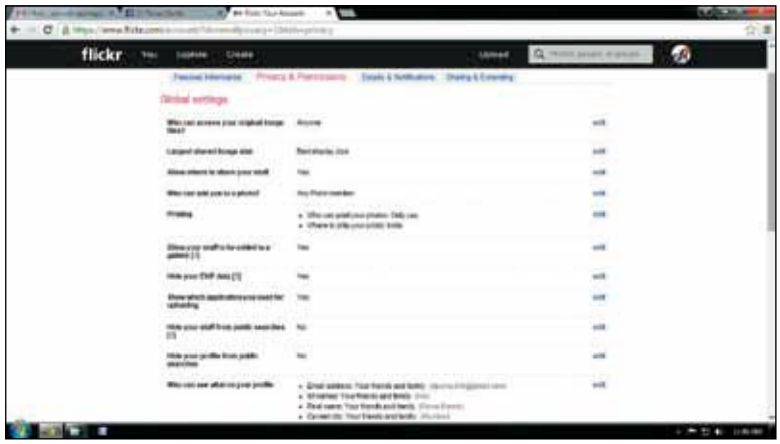
Watermarking

This is the easiest way to shout out loud; saying that I have copyrights of this photograph. Respect it and ask before using it. However, remember that experts in Photoshop can just layer it and your marking is washed away like water. There are ways of making water marks, though. Translucent patterns can be used and then your company name or your name can be overlaid on it. The opacity of the watermark can be changed and you can position your watermarks at odd places where the image is not disturbed but you know where it is; so even if it is stolen you know where and how to look for it! Try deciding on one full opacity water mark and the other one at different places according to your choice and with reduced opacity.

Huge watermarks that are spread across the photograph are a big no-no; they ruin the fun of viewing, learning and enjoying the image. Set a trend of using watermarks which will reduce the chances of photograph being stolen.

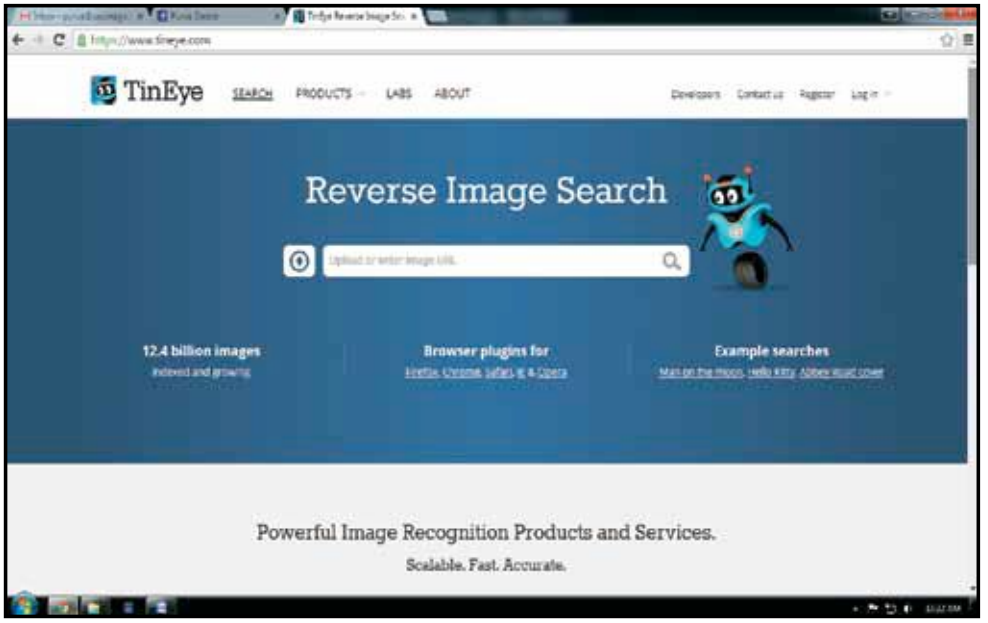
The right click: OFF!

This is quite basic, but it can be the first step towards avoiding illegal downloads and thefts. An internet savvy person might just laugh it away, but the first thing anybody would try is to right click on an image and save it! You can avoid such users by disabling right-clicking on the page, and they might keep wondering as to how to download the image. If they really want the image, then they will find ways to get that image. This might irritate the other regular loyal followers who are really dedicated and are interested in surfing around and knowing the details and reference markings. Hence, before making such a move, do read and find out if this is really going to fetch you the protection, or would just annoy, and eventually drive away, your regular people who come on your website.



Photograph Downloading Permissions

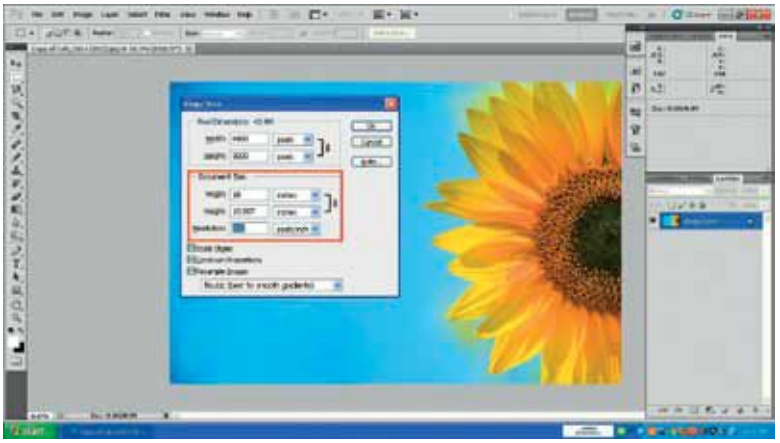
There are photography communities who are strict about the permissions. Also there are online photo – sharing and selling services like 500px, Flickr that have flexible permissions that protect your photographs. They have tracking systems and also have no right clicks. They do have an option open for downloading by the third party, but it should be agreed upon and the settings should be adjusted by the owner of the photograph to be kept open. The permissions can be changed and diluted according to the needs and choices of the buyer and the one who uploads the photographs. Be aware of these permissions and

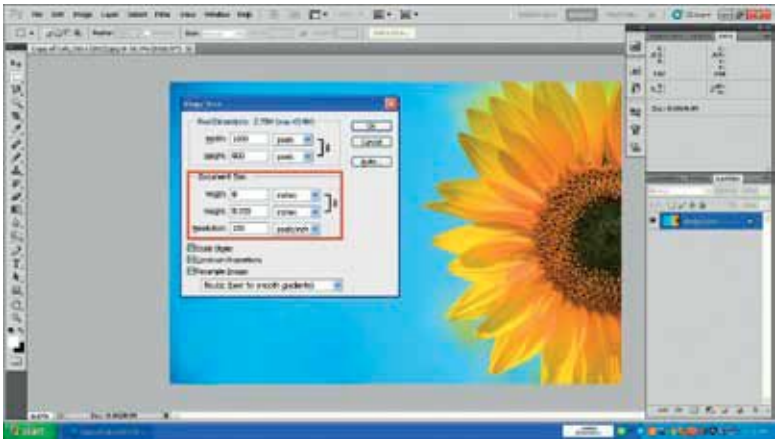


you can recognise your photograph, and if you shoot on RAW, there is no debate. One can strongly and precisely prove that the image is his/hers, might be able to get away with the copyright cost, plus the damages can be recovered from the person/company who has used your work.

The easiest way to check if your images have been stolen is, you upload your photograph on Google images and click search and if there are images which pop up and links follow, then you could just end up finding the thief all by yourself.

The more we read and discuss about this topic, we can draw a conclusion that there is no concrete solution unless you decide not to keep yourself updated, when there is a direct link sent to you through messages and emails, to cross check the details which they have sent. Keep a track on your follower and following list, as it becomes easy to track the suspects.





Tin Eye

A website known as Tin Eye is extremely interesting where you could post the URL or probably upload an image to check where it has been used. It's a reverse engine search, it automatically researches and searches the World Wide Web and tries to locate the image or the URL. However, Tin Eye is extremely moody, if it works it would work brilliantly and if not, the loading icon keeps on revolving and then you might as well close the tab and re-do it sometime later.

Resolution control

One should never upload an image with original size and resolution, no matter how small it is. The minimum resolution could be 1200px max on the longer side; by which the photograph looks big enough on the screen. You could also reduce the resolution to 170dpi as well as reduce the size for social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter where there are higher chances of theft happening. Reducing the size and resolution will make the image of low-quality, and the photograph will pixelate when printed.

Eventually it's you who wins as upload the photographs and keep it for yourself. But, in today's day and age, to not upload image is impractical! You have to get out there and display your work!

TEXT AND IMAGES: PURVA DAMLE

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Colour Banding and how to get rid of it

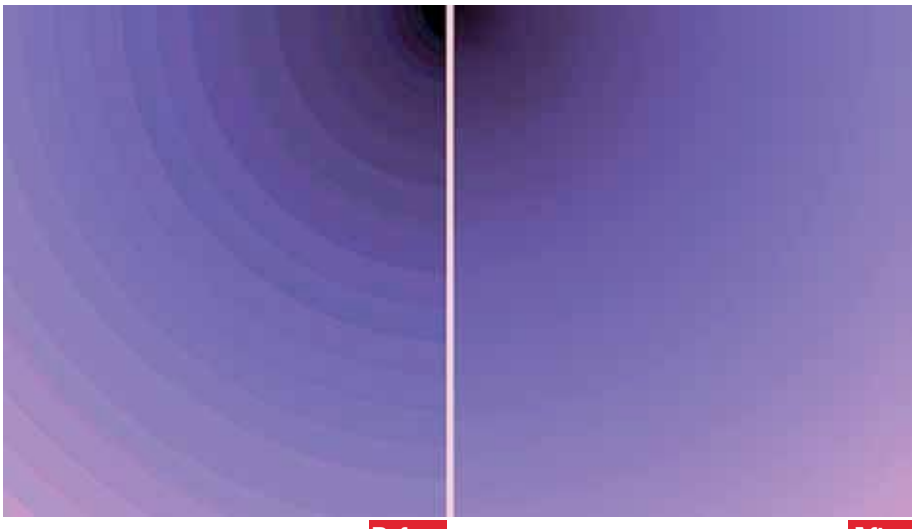
When it comes to printing and framing, a lot of variables are to be kept in mind in terms of sizes, print paper quality, colour modes and channels etc. A common occurrence while printing images is colour banding, which surprisingly very few beginners are aware of. Photographers print their images less nowadays, so colour banding is very rarely an issue they face or even notice on screen. This article will elaborate on colour banding and how to best avoid this phenomenon without compromising on the quality of the photographs.

WHAT IS COLOUR BANDING?

Colour banding is a phenomenon where colours are represented inaccurately in a photograph. Simply put, while editing, especially 8-bit images, one can often see patterns or lines visible in certain areas in the frame as the colour transition is not accurate. This formation of lines is called colour banding. Even though normal 8-bit JPEGs have enough pixel count to deal with colour banding on its own, excessive editing on an 8-bit image will however show some banding happening wherever there is a colour gradient involved. This is primarily caused due to the 8-bit image not having enough data to feed your image processing needs thus showing irregularities in colour transitions.

WHY DOES COLOUR BANDING OCCUR?

An 8-bit image has almost 16 million pixels and human eyes can only perceive about 10 million pixels. In theory, colour banding should not be visible to the naked eye, and it isn't. Then why is it still seen? Excessive editing is the answer. A JPEG image only has as much colour information and can handle only as much editing. The bits symbolise number of possible tonal values for each colour namely – Red, Green and Blue. 16 bit images naturally have higher possibilities of tonal values available thus reducing or negating the chances of colour banding. In 8 bit images the transition between different shades of colours are not smooth, thus making the lines noticeable due to abrupt colour changes. It is important to know that 8 bit images will naturally not display colour banding when the photograph is as-is. It will only start showing its weakness when edited heavily.



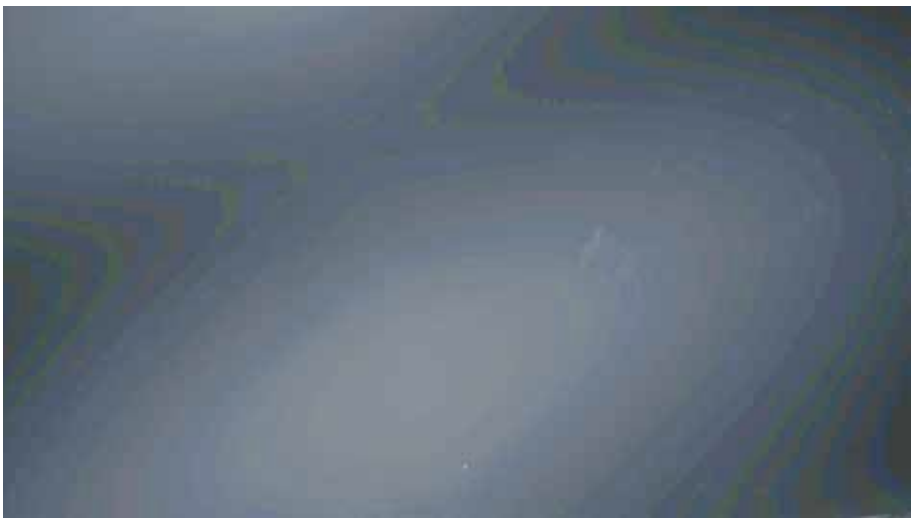
Before After

WHERE DOES COLOUR BANDING OCCUR?

It usually occurs in areas of the photograph where colours of similar tones form a gradient. Areas that consist of smooth colour tone transitions are most affected as the 8-bit photographs are unable to process the colours properly thus causing banding. Photographs of sunsets, studio photographs with gradient lighting, or any photograph that has dark spots with neutral blacks that do not have details like silhouettes will get colour bandings on them.

HOW TO GET RID OF COLOUR BANDING?

If you are getting colour banding on your photographs there are two ways to correct it. But first let's talk about ways to completely avoid it while shooting itself. Shooting RAW files are the best way to avoid colour banding. Shooting RAW files creates uncompressed, untouched images that can be greatly modified in post-processing. RAW files have a better bit depth so there is more freedom to edit your images without worrying about banding. JPEG images only support 8 bit colour depths and RAW files can support 16 bits. If you are planning to print your photographs, you need to be careful about what image format you shoot in,



as banding becomes much more visible in prints. The RAW files should not be exported to JPGs and then edited upon as that would bring back the posterisation or banding as we have seen before. Granted that shooting RAW files has its disadvantages like bigger file sizes, slower burst modes etc, it is a small price to pay for better print quality.

If you have already shot JPEG images and see colour banding, there are still ways to reduce it, if not completely remove it. We will go over the steps one by one.

The first step is to change the existing image to 16 bit depth. This can be done with Photoshop itself, but if you save it as a JPEG again, it will automatically become 8 bits. You can change the mode by going to Image > Mode> 16bit.

The second step is very simple and effective against colour banding. Just add noise! You may think that adding noise will spoil your photograph; there is a way to add subtle noise to the picture. The first step to doing that is to create a duplicate layer and change your new layer to a smart object. To change to smart object right click on the layer and then click on "Convert to smart object". Then go to filters > noise> add noise. Change the amount to 1 or 2 at the most so that the noise is not too visible and select Gaussian. Click on ok and then change either the opacity or the layer style to see which has the lowest visible blur and the banding should be reduced. Remember that you will have to save this image as a TIFF and not as a JPEG.

While there are other ways to fix this issue it is best if you shoot in RAW and avoid this overall. Shooting JPEG images and fixing it later reduces the quality of the image and also adding grains may not be the best way to edit every image. It does have certain drawbacks like increased file size etc, but that is a sacrifice worth making for better prints and better picture quality along with flexibility to edit photographs exactly the way you want it. So next time you shoot photographs of sunsets, or with a variety of colour range, we hope you keep banding in mind and everything mentioned in the article!

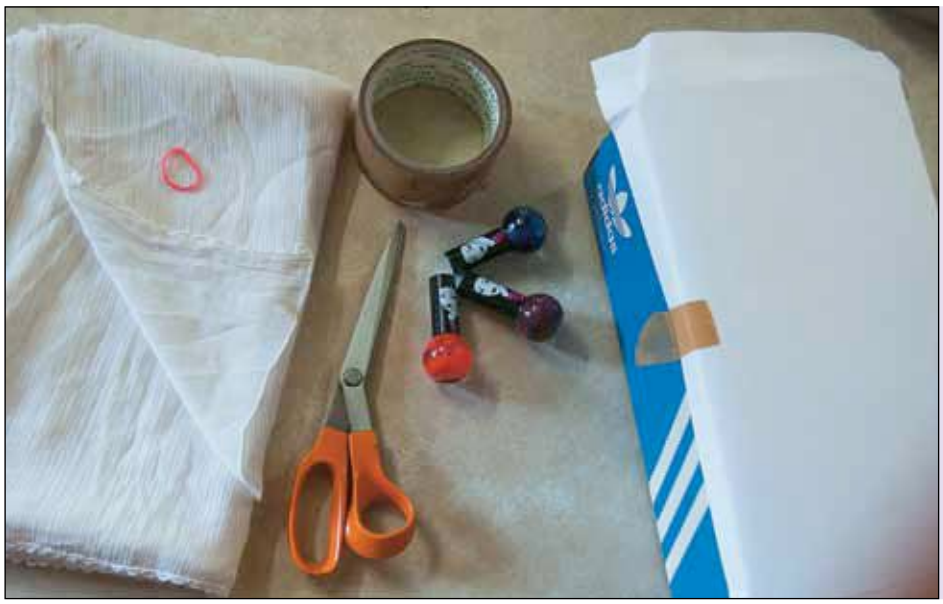
TEXT AND IMAGES: SOURADEEP ROY

DIY: *Homemade Reflectors*

There are so many accessories which you can make at home and get effective difference in your photography while at home.

One such accessory is a reflector. Knowing and understanding of photography is more of understanding the light, its angle and the attributes. Reflectors come very handy. Reflectors are basically that surface wherein the light is not absorbed but bounced back. Light bounces back from all kinds of surfaces. In water and air it refracts and from solid surfaces light reflects.

Reflectors are surfaces which help in lighting of the subject from the opposite side of the main source light or any other strong light sources. Reflectors are mostly used in outdoor photography. They are extremely effective when it comes to bouncing back of the sunlight.



Reflectors can be quickly made home and with the available material at home. Here we would need:

1) White cloth

2) Shoe Box

3) A rubber band

4) Scissors and scotch tape.

5) The subject
(here: nailpolish bottles)

Process

1) Take a shoe box. Preferably a light coloured one (white/ yellow). If a white one is not available, take any one that is available. With the help of the scotch tape, stick the print papers on it. As the box colour is blue we decided to stick the white print papers.

2) Take the white coloured cloth, make two folds; keep the shoe box on it. Bundle up the cloth and tie it like a bun with the help of the rubber band available.

3) Position the reflector in such a way that the subject would get distinctively lit and shadows would be lessened. Placing the homemade reflector opposite to the main source light will give the correct amount of fill light. One can easily see the difference of light in the frame.

Making these things back home would get your creative instincts to a greater height. Such DIYs would help you to get some quick solutions and would also be helpful in getting acceptable compositions. DIYs are those ways by which one gets the human touch and the feeling of doing one step extra for a particular shot.

Enjoy shooting with the reflectors you make! Send in new ideas for good DIYs related to cameras and photography. We would like to know how you make your photography world more interesting.

TEXT AND IMAGES: PURVA DAMLE

APP REVIEWS

This section brings you the reviews of all the new and noteworthy apps available on the various platforms

Last year, we had reviewed Snapseed in our April 2014 issue. About a year later, Snapseed has received a major upgrade and gone through many changes. In this app-review we take a look at the brand new updated app, to see what the new tweaks look like and how they perform.

SNAPSEED 2.0

LOOK

The app has got a new design and user interface, additional editing tools, which seems to be more streamlined and organised at first look. Previously the editing tools were at the bottom of the app, and one would scroll horizontally to access them. Now, to access the editing tools, you click on a tiny pencil icon at the bottom right, and a new grid-like screen pops up, which has all the different sets of editing options. This screen is divided in two sets – Tools and Filters. Some of the new additions to these include Spot Repair, Perspective Transform, Brush, Tonal Contrast and Lens Blur. When you select any of the tools, the adjustment options appear at the bottom, with a save or discard option. Let's take a look at these changes in detail.

TOOLS

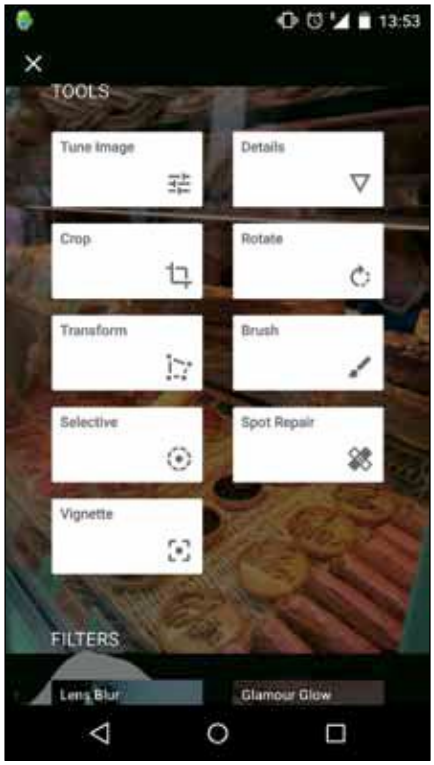
The major new additions in Tools is Transform, Spot Repair and Brush. The new Transform options is brilliant as it lets you transform the perspective of the image, vertically and horizontally, or rotate the image. The usage is easy, as the app has gesture control, you can choose one of the options between, horizontal, vertical or rotate by swiping up or down, and you can set the parameters by touching and dragging on to the right or left.

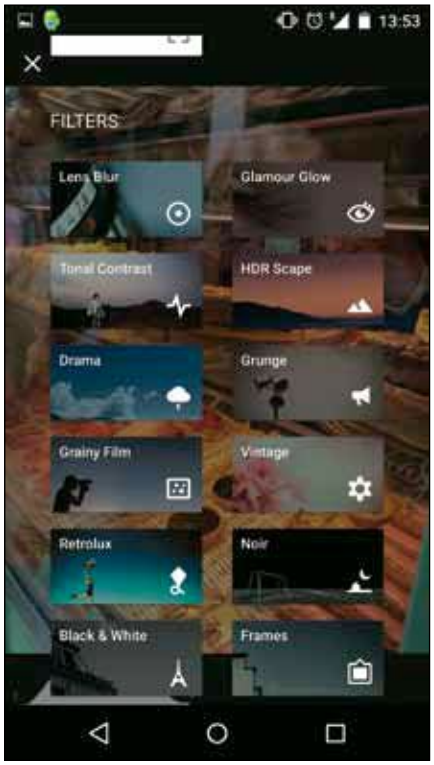
The other new option is Spot Repair in which you can heal any area of the image. If you're working on a small patch, you can enlarge the image by pinch and zooming in, and using the circular cursor to heal the spot; it's quite easy to use.

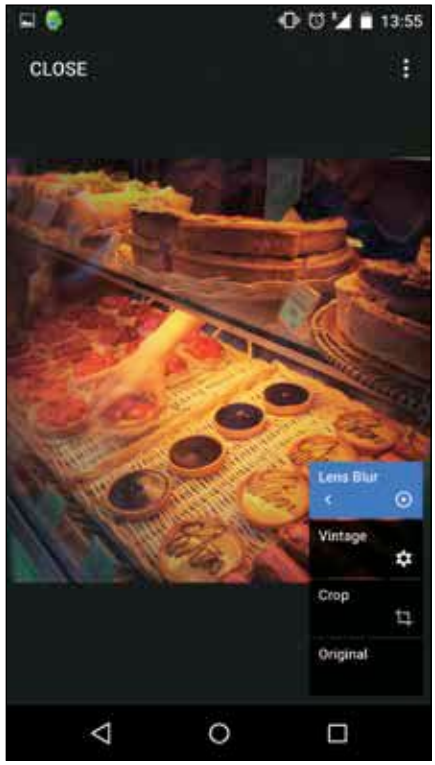
The new Brush option is a fantastic editing addition. You can use it for adjusting Dodge & Burn, Exposure, Temperature and Saturation of selected parts of the image. Pretty easy to use, there is a circular cursor on the image, and you can pinch-zoom the image, to work on a selected area. One of the options of Dodge & Burn, Exposure, Temperature or Saturation can be selected by clicking on the brush icon on the left bottom of the bar. Once you have selected an option, you can set the parameter by using the upward or the downward arrow, which has a range of -10 to 10, with 0 being the eraser. The parameter range for Exposure adjustment is -1.0 to 1.0. By clicking on the eye icon, you can see the changes reflected in a translucent red layer, giving you an idea of the area where you've applied the changes and the level of intensity.

FILTERS

In the Filters sections, the main additions are, Lens Blur, Glamour Glow, Vintage and more. Most of these effects work pretty great, and helps you enhance the image. As the name suggests, Lens Blur is to draw







attention to the subject of your photo by blurring and adjusting the brightness of the surrounding background; Glamour Glow adds a glow to the image that is particularly useful for glamour and fashion photography; Vintage is a set of filters that make any photo look like a vintage colour film photo from the 50s, 60s or 70s. Each of these filters, have detailed and precise editing options and tools to set parameter levels and adjustments.

STACKS

Now you don't have to select an editing step and worry about undoing that step. The app now has Stacks which lets you manage your edits smoothly. On the image screen, you will see a small box with a number on it, indicating the number of Stacks or layers applied (just like in Photoshop). When you click on it, it displays a list of edits on the right hand corner of the image, where you can tap on each one, and it shows the edit applied. When you tap on any edit it'll allow you to delete the stack, or re-edit any filter. There is also a stack brush to paint in and out of any filter. This is a fantastic addition, and makes editing much easier, more functional, and gives you more control over your images.

FINAL WORDS

We think this is a solid update for the app. Our only qualm was that one has to toggle back and forth continuously between the image and the editing tools screen, and that can be a little annoying. The app lends more control to the user on their image edits, and there is almost everything one could ask for from a mobile editing app. Snapseed was already quite a powerful and popular app among mobile photographers, and with the new tweaks, it is sure to not just retain that position, but also gather more enthusiastic users.

TEXT & IMAGES : ABHISHEK DESAI

ZTE Nubia Z9 Mini

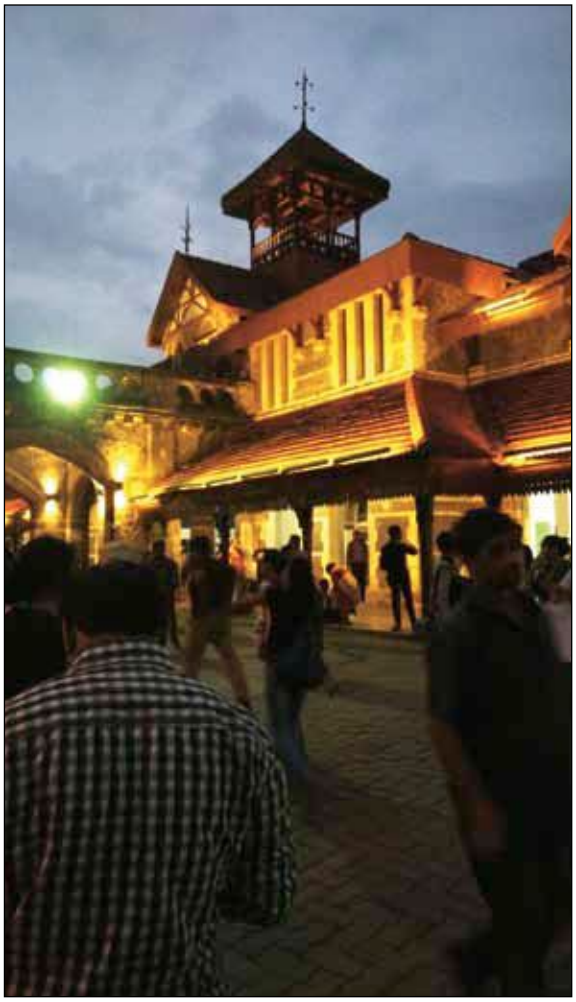
Chinese phone manufacturer ZTE recently launched the Z9 Mini in its Nubia series of smartphones. This camera is a compact, scaled-down version of their previously launched Nubia Z9. The new Z9 Mini has a 5-inch display screen, with a full-HD resolution of 1920x1080 pixels. Powered with a Qualcomm's mid-range Snapdragon 615 processor, the phone comes with a 2GB RAM. But the real highlight is the 16-megapixel rear shooter, and an 8-megapixel front camera. But does it perform as good as it sounds? Read on to find out more.

Design and Hardware

The Nubia Z9 Mini is made with a laser carving technology that includes Crystal UV, protective paint, metal gasification, colour locking, toning and primary coat. The phone is great to look at. It is sleek and stylish, and is also not too heavy to hold. The phone is comfortable to hold, and seems well-built. It has an alloy body frame, and the back panel is made of poly carbonate. The body is mostly black, with a bit of red at places, like the home button and navigation keys which have a red backlight, and a red circle around the rear camera.

SPECIFICATION

Network	GSM / CDMA / HSPA / LTE
Dimensions	141.3 x 69.8 x 8.2 mm (5.56 x 2.75 x 0.32 in)
Weight	147 g (5.19 oz)
Sim	Dual SIM (Nano-SIM, dual stand-by)
Display	Capacitive touchscreen, 16M colors, 5.0 inches , 1080 x 1920 pixels
OS	Android OS, v5.0.2 (Lollipop)
Chipset	Qualcomm MSM8939 Snapdragon 615
CPU	Quad-core 1.5 GHz Cortex-A53 & quad-core 1.0 GHz Cortex-A53
GPU	Adreno 405
Memory	Internal 16 GB, 2 GB RAM, expandable microSD, up to 128 GB
Camera	Primary -16 MP, 1080p@30fps, Secondary - 8 MP, 1080p
Connectivity	Wi-Fi 802.11 a/b/g/n/ac, dual-band, Wi-Fi Direct, DLNA, hotspot, Bluetooth v4.0, A2DP
GPS	Yes, with A-GPS, GLONASS
Battery	Non-removable Li-Ion 2900 mAh battery



On the left side of the phone is the sim slot, whereas the right side has the volume rocker and power key in grey-coloured metal. The 3.5mm headset jack is on the top of the phone, with the speakers and the micro-USB port at the bottom of the phone.

Sound, display and features

With a phone that is aimed at mobile photographers with its massive 16-megapixel shooter, it is quite critical that the display is good. While the phone does not have a borderless screen, the big 5-inch, full-HD 1080p resolution display of the Z9 Mini is quite impressive. The HD screen of the phone comes with gorilla glass integrated with the metal body. The screen is bright, and colours appear beautiful, vibrant and quite balanced. The performance of the screen in outdoor sunlight also lives up to the expectations. As mentioned earlier, the phone has a 16 megapixel primary camera and an 8 megapixel front shooter.

The phone has 2GB RAM and is fitted with 1.5 GHz 8-core Qualcomm Snapdragon 64 bit 615 processor fitted with Adreno 405 graphics processor. The Mini comes with Android Lollipop V5.0.2 installed, and Nubia V2.8 UI. The phone supports dual sim dual standby Nano sim cards slots with 4G FDD-LTE support (GSM, HSPA+, LTE), and additional connectivity options include Wi-Fi 802.11 a/b/g/n/ac and Bluetooth 4.0. It has a 2900mAH lithium-ion battery which claims to provide talk-time of 30 hours and standby time of 600 hours. The battery lasted for about 6 hours with heavy usage, whereas general usage made it last through an entire day. The Z9 Mini has inbuilt 16GB internal memory, which we feel is sub-par compared to today's phones in the market. However, the storage is expandable up to 128GB using a microSD card. Other features include Video Calls, Dual SIM, GPS, Music Player, Video Player, FM Radio, Gyroscope, Proximity sensor, Ambient light sensor, eCompass, E-mail.

Camera

Coming to the most important section, the camera! The Nubia Z9 Mini has a powerful 16 megapixel primary camera that definitely did not

disappoint us. The camera delivered excellent results, and we were very pleased with the images. The rear 16MP camera uses a Sony IMX234 Exmor RS sensor, whereas the front 8-megapixel camera Sony IMX179 Exmor R with back-illuminated image sensor. From the images shot using the phone, one can clearly see the difference the sensors make.

The Z9 Mini's camera is certainly one of the most feature-rich apps we've seen on a phone recently. The camera offers a plethora of features to users, and the amount of manual control it offers, that one will feel like it's almost a DSLR.

When you go into the PRO mode, the camera lets you control everything, from white balance and ISO, to aperture and exposure compensation. The PRO mode also let's you control the focus, and you can also change the regular shooting mode to Macro, Portrait, Indoor or Landscape. The camera also offers control over depth-of-field and shutter speed, and you can also select shutter priority. There are other special camera modes that are targetted at clicking specific type of images. The modes include, Light Painting, Special Effect, Electronic Aperture, Panorama, Slow Shutter and Star Track.

We found the images shot in outdoor light with the rear camera to be quite good. They produced great detail and accurate colours with no oversaturation. There was no visible noise in the images. The indoor shots taken by the phone were impressive too, with good detail, and colour reproduction, with negligible noise. In low-lighting conditions, the images were alright, as one could see noise. However, it's to be noted that, while the camera increases the noise, it tries to retain details, instead of softening the image. Our one qualm with the phone was that, after you clicked an image, and went to the preview, the phone would show you a low-res version of the image. To see the actual image one has to go to the phone gallery to view it. We thought this was a drawback for users, who would like to see an instant full preview of the actual image, to see how it turned out. The low-res preview image confuses the user, as even well-focussed images end-up looking poorly focussed and soft.

The front camera output was quite remarkable too, as it clicked some really good selfies with details. The video mode was satisfactory, and it had good exposure transition, when moving from well-lit to low-light area, and vice-versa.

Conclusion

We were overall quite satisfied with the performance of Nubia Z9 Mini. The camera produced excellent images, from the colour reproduction to detail in the output. The phone has a decent battery life, and a brilliant 5-inch display screen with full-HD resolution of 1920x1080 pixels. At ₹16,999, Nubia Z9 Mini is one of the better phones in that price range, and possibly the best camera-focussed phone. If you are someone who is looking for a phone with a great camera, and are interested in specifically shooting using a mobile phone, this is definitely a phone worth considering.

TEXT AND IMAGES: ABHISHEK DESAI

Strontium 64GB SDXC UHS-1 U3 Nitro Plus card

With the development of flash drives from CF cards, SD cards, Mini SD cards and MicroSD cards; memory cards have come a long way, and different companies are coming up with their own cards. SD cards have become an industry standard which is compatible with most electronic devices. Other than the rise in the storage capacities of these memory cards, data transfer rates are another factor to check while selecting the right card for you. Singapore-based flash memory manufacturing company Strontium recently launched their 64GB SDXC UHS-1 U3 Nitro Plus card. This month we review the new card which claims transfer rates of 95MB/s (Read) and 85MB/s (Write), and is capable of recording Full HD, 3D and 4K video recording. Let's see how it performed.

The Benchmarking Tests

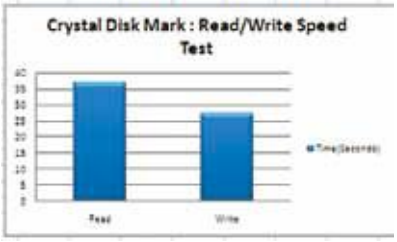
We have taken the three things into consideration while reviewing the card. Besides checking the folder transfer speed and in-camera performance with the basic RAW settings, we also performed a benchmark test using Crystal Disk Mark (version 3.01) to clock the SD card's read/write speeds, so we could see what result the card delivers.

Parameters

- Crystal Disk Mark 3.0.1
- Folder Test
- In-camera performance

Crystal Disk Mark 3.01 Test

Strontium 64GB SDXC UHS-1 U3 Nitro Plus card clocked a read speed of 37.03 MB/sec and a write speed of 27.18 MB/sec. We thought this was quite subpar, and not up to the claimed transfer rates.



Folder Transfer Test

To test folder transfer speeds, we made a folder with 1 GB (1024MB) data and clocked both the time required to transfer the data from the memory card to the computer and from the computer to the memory card. The Strontium card clocked 48.3 seconds computer to card and for card to computer it came up to 33.8 seconds. We found the speed of copying to be fast enough.

In-Camera performance

We tested the card with the Canon EOS 6D, to see how Strontium Nitro Plus performed in-camera. We set the camera's shutter speed on 1/60, aperture on f/7.1 and ISO on 100. The camera was tested in various file formats in the continuous shooting or burst mode while using complete manual settings. When set to JPEG, the result was 4.26 frames per second (fps). When the camera was set to shoot on the largest size RAW file, the Strontium card recorded an average frame rate of 2.26 fps/sec.

Conclusion

While more professional grade cameras are adapting to the SD cards as a recording format, it becomes necessary for memory card manufacturers to develop faster cards with large capacities. With recorded read speed of 37.03 MB/second and write speeds of over 27.18 MB/second, the Strontium 64GB SDXC UHS-1 U3 Nitro Plus is an average card. The card fared decent in folder transfer test, and the in-camera performance was not bad either. If you are okay with compromising on the performance speed, and space is your main priority, the 64GB card, retailing at about ₹4499, is not bad.

TEXT AND IMAGES: PURVA DAMLE

PHOTOSCAPE

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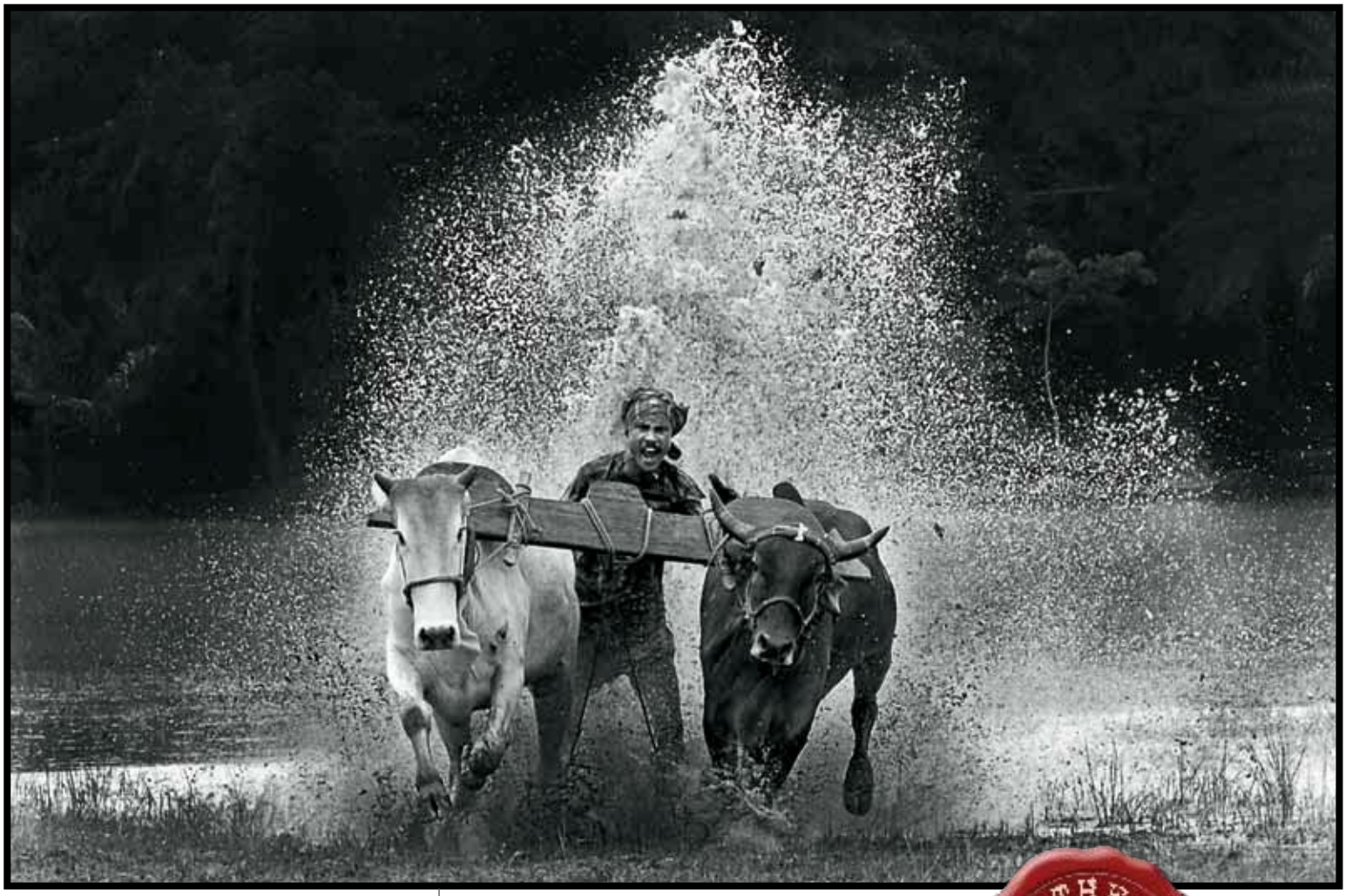


Name: Abhishek Kundu
Camera: Nikon D610
Aperture: F/7.1
Shutter speed: 1/1000 sec
ISO: 400

The Pic of the Month in the PHOTOSCAPE section will receive a gift from Uniross

Name: Amartya Mukherjee
Camera: Nikon D4
Aperture: F/8.0
Shutter speed: 8 seconds
ISO: 200

Name: Prasun Sanyal
Camera: Nikon D5000
Aperture: f/16
Shutter Speed: 1/160
ISO: 200

Name: Kishor Bej
Camera: Nikon D7000
Aperture: F/9
Shutter speed: 1/20 sec
ISO: 320

Name: Manish Jaisi
Camera: Canon EOS 600D
Aperture: F/16
Shutter speed: 6 sec
ISO: 100

Name: Rakesh Kumar
Camera: Nikon D810
Aperture: F/8
Shutter speed: 1/1000
ISO: 6400

Name: Nikhil Mace
Camera: Canon EOS 600D
Aperture: F/3.5
Shutter speed: 1/640 sec
ISO: 400

The Pic of the Month in the PHOTOSCAPE section will receive a gift from Uniross

Name: Bipul Biswas
Camera: Nikon D90
Aperture: F/9
Shutter speed: 1/400 sec
ISO: 200

Name: Satpal Singh
Camera: Nikon D90
Aperture: F/14
Shutter speed: 1/160 sec
ISO: 200

Name: Indranil Basu Mallick
Camera: Canon EOS 70D
Aperture: F/10
Shutter speed: NA
ISO: 100

PHOTOMONTAGE

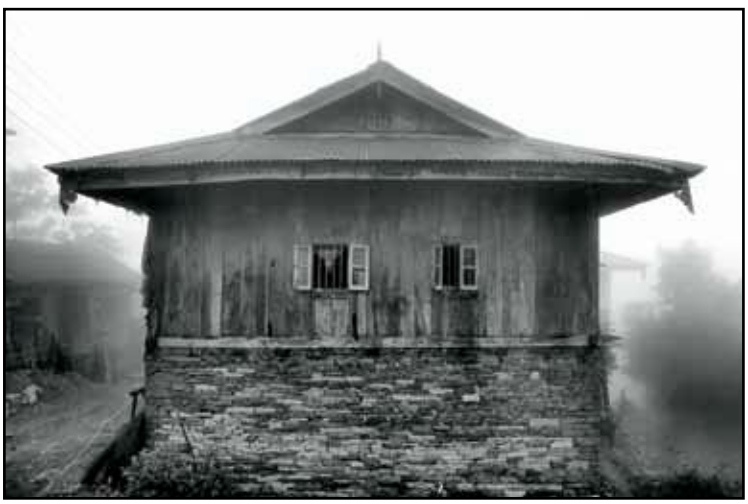
Looking to get your portfolio featured??

Send your entry to *asianphotographyindia@gmail.com* and tell us why we should feature it

The mystic atmosphere of North Bengal and Sikkim covered in fog is always mesmerising. The fragrance of monsoon makes the whole ambiance surprisingly beautiful. The mystic layers on the hills, the expansion of the clouds, the raindrops on the leaves altogether can create beautiful frames. These images reflect the drenched flavour of the place.

Sayan Bhattacharya, Kolkata

The Featured portfolio in the PHOTOMONTAGE section will receive a gift from Uniross



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